

# 1 Corinthians 11:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

## Analysis

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**Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?—**

Paul shifts from theological argument (vv. 3-12) to appeals to propriety and nature (vv. 13-15). Ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε (judge among yourselves)—Paul invokes the Corinthians' own sense of decorum. Πρέπον ἐστίν (is it fitting/proper?) appeals to innate moral intuition and cultural appropriateness.

This isn't relativism but incarnational theology. Biblical truth engages cultural forms without being reducible to them. In Corinthian context, an uncovered woman praying publicly was *aprepon* (unseemly, improper)—it violated both creational order and social propriety. Paul doesn't separate theological truth from cultural expression; he expects theological truth to shape cultural practice. The Corinthians' own judgment, properly informed by Scripture and creation, should align with Paul's instruction. This rhetorical question expects agreement—surely you see the impropriety?

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman culture valued decorum (τὸ πρέπον)—behaving appropriately according to one's station, gender, and context. Respectable women demonstrated modesty in dress and demeanor. Public worship was particularly sensitive—both pagan and Jewish traditions had gendered practices. Paul appeals to shared values of propriety while grounding them in deeper theological realities. His question

assumes the Corinthians' cultural instincts align with biblical principle, inviting self-reflection rather than authoritarian diktat.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do you discern which cultural practices embody biblical principles versus which are merely conventional?
2. What role should 'seemliness' or propriety play in Christian worship decisions?
3. How can churches engage cultural norms constructively without becoming legalistic or worldly?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐν	ὑμῖν	αὐτοῖς	κρίνατε·	πρέπον	ἐστὶν	γυναῖκα
<b>in</b>	<b>yourselves</b>	G846	<b>Judge</b>	<b>comely</b>	<b>is it</b>	<b>that a woman</b>
G1722	G5213		G2919	G4241	G2076	G1135
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ἀκατακάλυπτον	τῷ	θεῷ	προσεύχεσθαι			
<b>uncovered</b>	G3588	<b>unto God</b>	<b>pray</b>			
G177		G2316	G4336			

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