

# 1 Corinthians 11:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

## Analysis

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**But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God**—Paul establishes a theological hierarchy using κεφαλὴ (kephalē, head), which can mean source, authority, or both. The threefold chain—God → Christ → man → woman—grounds the head-covering practice (vv. 4-16) in created order, not mere cultural convention.

This verse is controversial but crucial. Kephālē likely carries both source (Genesis 2:21-23, woman from man) and authority (Ephesians 5:23-24). Critically, **and the head of Christ is God** shows this is not about ontological inferiority—Christ is fully divine—but about economic order within the Trinity (1 Corinthians 15:28). Just as Christ submits to the Father without being less divine, wives' submission to husbands doesn't imply inferior worth or dignity (Galatians 3:28). Paul's theology roots gender roles in creation order and Trinitarian relations, not cultural patriarchy.

## Historical Context

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Roman Corinth had complex gender norms. Elite Roman women enjoyed significant freedom, while Greek customs were more restrictive. Pagan religious ceremonies often featured ecstatic, gender-bending rites (temple prostitutes, eunuch priests). Paul addresses a church where new freedom in Christ (Galatians

3:28) was being misunderstood as erasure of creational distinctions. Some Corinthian women were apparently discarding head coverings during worship, possibly claiming radical egalitarianism or spiritual superiority.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the Trinity's internal ordering (Father, Son, Spirit) model unity with distinction rather than sameness?
2. In what ways does modern culture confuse equality of worth with sameness of role?
3. How can churches affirm women's equal dignity and spiritual gifts while honoring biblical distinctions in marriage and church leadership?

## Interlinear Text

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θέλω	δὲ	ὕμᾱς	εἰδέναι	ὅτι	παντὸς	ἀνὴρ	ἡ
<b>I would have</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>you</b>	<b>know</b>	<b>that</b>	<b>of every</b>	<b>is the man</b>	G3588
G2309	G1161	G5209	G1492	G3754	G3956	G435	
κεφαλὴ	ὁ	Χριστοῦ	ἐστίν	κεφαλὴ	δὲ	γυναικὸς	ὁ
<b>the head</b>	G3588	<b>Christ</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>the head</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>of the woman</b>	G3588
G2776		G5547	G2076	G2776	G1161	G1135	
ἀνὴρ	κεφαλὴ	δὲ	Χριστοῦ	ὁ	θεός		
<b>is the man</b>	<b>the head</b>	<b>But</b>	<b>Christ</b>	G3588	<b>is God</b>		
G435	G2776	G1161	G5547		G2316		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 3:16** (Parallel theme): Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

**Colossians 3:18** (Parallel theme): Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

**Colossians 1:18** (Parallel theme): And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

**1 Corinthians 3:23** (References Christ): And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

**Ephesians 4:15** (References Christ): But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

**Colossians 2:19** (References God): And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

**1 Peter 3:1** (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

**Colossians 2:10** (Parallel theme): And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: