

# PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

## “THE PASSAGE IS CLEAR, BUT...”

A few weeks ago I had a discussion with a young man who preaches from time to time. Our discussion centered around **1 Cor. 11:2-16**. The text reads as follows:

*“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 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. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”*

Now, the person I am referring to holds the truth concerning what the covering is; i.e. long hair. However, in our conversation, he said something to me **like** (I do not want to misquote him), *“I believe there is one covering noted in the text, and that covering is long hair, but I cannot see how that would forbid the text to allow for an artificial veil as well.”* Now, I tried to show this fellow, whom I had come to have some confidence in, where his reasoning winds up. I tried to impress upon him that his reasoning would allow for any and every sort of error and immorality. I think he got the point. I hope he did.

Dear reader, I hope **you** understand the fallacy of such a mindset. I hope **you** understand that once one begins to go down the road noted, it’s “game over!” Let me illustrate.

“Bob” points out the error of church sponsored entertainment to “Tom,” who engages in such. Bob opens the Bible and has Tom read **1 Cor. 11:17-34** – which clearly spells out that the local church is not to be in the entertainment business. Tom’s response to Bob? *“I can see that this passage is clearly instructing the local church not to engage in entertainment, but such would not forbid carnivals and chili-suppers as well.”* Will this mindset fly? No!

“Dave” and “Mike” are friends. Dave knows Mike attends a “church” that has a woman “preacher” who’s usurped God’s intended order. Dave, being a good friend, opens the Bible and has Mike read the following words: *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”* (**1 Tim. 2:11-12**). Mike’s response to Dave? *“I can easily see what this passage is teaching, but I cannot see how the same text would not also allow for sister Sarah to keep on preaching.”* Will this mindset fly? No!

“Stan” and “George” are co-workers who often discuss the Bible in the lunchroom. Stan is a member of the church. George is a member of a feel-good, do-just-about-anything-you-like, community church. One day the discussion turns to homosexuality. George asks Stan if he believes his homosexual fleshly brother can remain a homosexual and please God. Stan has George read the following words: *“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet”* (**Rom. 1:27**). George’s response to Stan? *“The passage sure is clear, but I still do not see how my brother could not continue in homosexuality and be pleasing to God.”* Will this mindset fly? No!

Folks, when God gets specific about things, and leaves only one option, that option is the only option. To suggest otherwise is both dangerous and foolish. If such can be so easily understood when it comes to issues like the social gospel, who should be preaching, and homosexuality, then why, oh why, is there so much confusion over **1 Cor. 11:2-16**? There shouldn’t be. There wouldn’t be if people would simply be content to stick with what they can read and not add to the text (**cf. 1 Cor. 4:6**).