

The Covering of a Wife

There are basically two coverings in a marriage:

The husband as steward of the wife and family

The husband and wife as spiritual protectors of the family warring it.

The concept of covering as used by the church is the protection (covering) of someone or something because they have authority over it. People are told to come under the authority of this covering which is usually said to be spiritual of the husband over the wife and is another name for headship.

In a sense the concept of covering is an extension of stewardship or ownership. Jesus owns us so He is our covering spiritually and physically when He is our Lord. Our covering is our position in His Kingdom as His citizen and adopted 'son of The Father'. He is our King and has this responsibility so for a person to say they are our covering is assuming the position Jesus has over a person (1 Pet 2:25) and displace Him.

Jesus may ask people to carry out the responsibility of physically protecting people and providing for their needs but this is either because they have been made a steward of that person or they have been made a spiritual mentor of that person (only in respect of the lessons they have to teach them) for a period of time. To assume physical protection and also assume spiritual protection is to abuse the spiritual covering of Jesus over that person. Peter himself says that Jesus is the covering of our souls (spiritual covering):

1Pe 2:25 For you were straying like lost sheep, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your souls.

We are stewards of the things of God that He has given us to care for Him which means we work in the physical protecting and in the spiritual warring against Satan over them but as all are stewards of the things of God no one has authority over another in this.

1 Cor 4:1 states: Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

We are stewards of the knowledge of God and His Kingdom in this world and the ministry that Jesus has of deliverance, of salvation and from the effects of Satan's kingdom on a Christian and comforting those in need. Nowhere does it say in the Bible we are spiritual stewards of another Christian. We may be used to guide them spiritually (and in this sense have spiritual authority over them) but do not have the spiritual authority to command them to do anything or to correct their spiritual errors.

Eph 5:1-2 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ep 6:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

There is no principle of spiritual headship in the relationships between Christians as we are to submit to each other as necessary for the purposes of The Kingdom of God and the purposes of Jesus.

The only example of submission (giving authority to another over your life) is in Eph 5:22 and that is for the purposes of The Kingdom and order in the family. This headship is only domestic, for the household a wife is in and no other household or circumstances, and not spiritual and is for the purposes of providing for and protecting the wife and family.

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

This is more clearly expressed in 1 Peter 3:1-6 if you understand all is based on kingdom relationships.

As it can be seen the concept of covering can only be applied to Jesus except where He has delegated domestic headship authority for the protection of the wife and family or a partial spiritual authority for the purposes of mentoring and then only in the area being mentored and for as long as Jesus says to mentor.

Nowhere in the Bible is his role as our shepherd and bishop delegated to another. Ministries to others should be in accordance with His guidelines to help them mature in Jesus:

*Eph 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ:** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of*

People are given to the body to help them be like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is their guide. He may use them to guide people but they are not sent to be leaders but servants to the church. A servant does what their master tells them too and does not tell the master what to do. When they do express authority it is only because the master has told them what to do and not because they have had the authority to do this.

Submission in the Bible is for the sake of serving another in Love where you place yourself at their service to meet their need, or the submitting to the maturity of another Christian so they can help guide you to maturity or advise you on problems. This type of submission is not permanent and lasts only as long as the need for submission is there. Note it is not control but allowing another to dictate in part or whole what you are to do as you serve them on behalf of Jesus so they can guide you in this. In this service or mentoring alone is partial spiritual authority given to another over a person in spiritual things and even then it is only because the person represents Jesus and what Jesus wants to tell or do for that person and it is only for the season of mentoring and no longer.

The laws of the land give authority to one over another but that is for administrative and protective purposes of the land and is not for spiritual things. This is why in a denomination there is no spiritual headship over its members but only legal headship for the purposes of the law of the land,

The Covering of Women

Headship and the physical 'covering' of a wife go together. Whoever is your spiritual head is said to be your covering. In the case of a wife it is said her husband is her spiritual covering as he is her

spiritual head. Elsewhere we have shown that headship over a wife is only domestic and not spiritual so this statement cannot be true in a marriage.

The covering of the husband is only domestic as he has been given care and protection of the wife (only on earth) and is to be a good steward of her but needs her to submit to his decision making for this to happen. Even then marriage is more a partnership of equals than a dictatorship.

Who then is the wife's spiritual covering. Jesus is her spiritual covering. She serves Him and she answers to Him spiritually so He is her authority and her covering (1 Pet 2:25). She submits 'as to The Lord' and then as result of this to her husband (Eph 5:22).

Her spiritual protection is not from man but from her position in The kingdom of God as a citizen of Jesus who she calls and obeys as Lord and Master. She is under the spiritual protection of Jesus and as long as He is her Lord she has His protection.

Submission to the husband is purely because Jesus asks her too and if she loves her husband it is also out of the desire to serve him out of her love for him. He is also her physical protector on earth.

The covering of single women is Jesus and He is their spiritual and domestic head unless they are still under age children under their parents in which case the parents are their covering as the parents are their provider and protection (stewardship of them) as God has declared that the children be submissive to them.

There are two passages to do with headship (and thus covering) in marriage where the term is usually applied: Eph 5:22 ff and 1 Pet 3:1-7. In the passage in 1 Peter, the domestic relationship only is dealt with as the Christian wife belongs to a different spiritual kingdom (that of The Father) to the husband (that of the Father's enemy, Satan) so there is no connection of authority lines in the spiritual. If we say there then that Ephesians and 1 Peter 3 contradict each other because Ephesians is said to give spiritual headship to a man and 1 Pet 3 does not, and because headship can only be domestic as the passage in Ephesians must agree with the one in 1 Peter 3:1-6.

A non-Christian cannot be the spiritual covering of a woman and can only be a physical provider and protector of her. This passage (1 Pet 3:1-6) alone must remove the man as a wife's spiritual covering as he belongs to the kingdom of Satan and God would not place a Christian wife under the authority of Satan again.

The wife is covered by whoever is in authority over her, so spiritually it is Jesus and domestically it is Husband. In a church to place the pastor as your spiritual covering is to take away Jesus. I see no delegation or appointment of this role by Jesus to a pastor to be anyone's spiritual covering as there is with the casting out of demons. There are qualifications mentioned but no delegation of authority by Jesus. (1 Pet 2:25).

Nowhere in The Bible is there a written delegation saying a pastor is the spiritual head of a church and thus its covering.

A minister is not the covering of a congregation. Jesus said the minister is a servant so cannot be the and He said to call no man "Father" so they cannot be called 'father'. We are also told we are

priests so they cannot be called priest and treated as superior to us or more special than us because we also are priests according to The Bible as we all minister to Jesus.

There is the problem of serving two masters if the minister has authority over a congregation. You cannot serve the minister and Jesus usually as the minister is not perfect and does not know the plans of God to advise you each individually what to do. Only The Holy Spirit can tell us our part and that is why He has been given to lead us and not another person.

An elder has to rule his household well domestically before he can be given spiritual oversight over others (note not authority but the right to help them spiritually – mentorship). Unless he can rule the physical area of his life (himself and his family) in accordance with God's requirements, there is no way God will let him have spiritual oversight of other people.

One who has oversight (stewardship) of another has care of it for Jesus and must do what they are told to do in regard to that person while one who has authority over something can usually do what they want with it. Ministers are given oversight and must do what Jesus says to do with what they have been trusted with as stewards. Until you are led by The Holy Spirit in all things you cannot be given oversight of anything as you do not know what Jesus desires done with it (unless the Bible clearly shows you what to do with it).

A leader is a servant and advisor not a master to command others. He serves spiritually through meeting the spiritual needs of others. He is not a ruler but a mature person people come to consult for help with problems and as such he has oversight in the sense of meeting their spiritual needs rather than command them to do things. He can only advise them. It is up to the recipient of the advice whether they accept it or not.

The moment a mentor controls what another does rather than advising them what to do they usurp the role of Jesus by becoming their master instead of Him unless they are meeting the requirements of the land or denomination, in other words a physical/legal requirement and not a spiritual requirement.

Unless it is a denominational matter a leader cannot warn you or tell you to stop doing something. He is not your moral judge. Jesus and The Bible are! The denomination minister can only advise you what denominational guidelines are as well as what the result of breaking them could be. They can exclude you from denominational premises for breaking the guidelines of the denomination though but that is only breaking man's laws not those of God. They cannot remove your citizenship in heaven.

You are not excluded by them from The Body of Christ unless you sin and then it is because you exclude yourself through your rebellion against Jesus.

It is to be noted that if you cannot love and minister to your wife and children whom God has given you to be steward of He cannot give you others of his flock to love and minister too on His behalf.

Whenever the family is mentioned, the relationship is domestic as the spiritual relationship is individually between each member of the family and God. It is reflected in your relationship with others but for a wife call her husband Lord or Master spiritually is to remove Jesus from this spiritual headship. This is idolatry unless it is as legal requirement of the land.

When God created everything he did not make women. They were made after the six days of creation and were not created from the dust of the earth but from Adam's flesh. Thus showing their dependence on man and the oneness they can have in Jesus as well as the incompleteness of man without them.

If a man ignores this dependence of his wife on his provision and protection as well as the unity they both can have in Jesus he will have strife in his marriage all the days of his life. If a wife does not submit and depend on her husband's rule in the family, she will have strife all the days of her life.

A rib was removed. A rib is used to protect the lungs where the breath of life is. So from the life of man woman was she is to ensure her life continues as a helpmeet to meet the requirements of God for her.

An Example of failed headship

Gen 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

This command was given to Adam before Eve was made and it is assumed Adam then relayed it to her after she was created. Thus there was a spiritual element and a domestic element.

Adam's Sin

Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Adam was commanded to protect the Garden and cultivate it as a service to God. The Garden was part of the Kingdom of God and in it was the tree of good and evil (v17). So having been given care of the Garden He was also commanded not to eat the fruit of one specific tree. His sin was not doing what He was told so that the tree was not protected. He failed in his stewardship of eve and the tree and as a result she ate of the fruit. So both sinned as a result of Adam's poor stewardship.

Through this disobedience sin entered the world through Adam and not Eve. Because of sin, death and decay entered and will not be removed until the new heavens and earth is made by Jesus and all that was under the effects of Satan and the fall are removed forever from the earth.

The woman was innocent of the original sin which is why she was chosen to give birth to the Messiah.

Perhaps this is a wake-up call to Christians to tend what they have as a good stewards of it as to do otherwise is sin and will lead to more sin.

Adam was held responsible for sin entering the world. Why? Eve ate the forbidden fruit and gave it to him to eat so she ate first. Why was hers not the first sin?

If he had guarded the tree properly he would not have allowed Eve to eat so was negligent in his stewardship of the tree. Adam also had not fulfilled his stewardship role in protecting Eve or the garden. As a result of this she sinned. He did not apply his headship to stop her eating the fruit of the tree and so was guilty of abusing his headship and being a bad steward of the wife he had been given by God.

The consequence was that Eve sinned but his sinning in stewardship and failing in his headship responsibilities were really the first sins which crystallised the moment she took the fruit and not just when she ate it.

This was when Adam and Eve rejected the authority of God by being indifferent to it and as a result were no longer citizens of the Kingdom of God and were expelled from the Garden of Eden which was part of The Kingdom of God. They had listened to another god. Satan, the god of this world so now were in the world he controlled.

Now if Eve had obeyed God (spiritual obedience) then there would have been no sin. If Eve had obeyed Adam (domestic headship not spiritual as his authority over the earth was only domestic) then there would have been no sin either. If Adam had been a better head of the household then Eve would have obeyed him and not eaten the forbidden fruit because of her love for him and the care he had given to her. He did not do his role of protecting her from evil but actually joined in with her in this sin and thus compounded further this fall from God's Grace.

It shows the wife has two authority figures over her. If spiritual authority over her had been given to the man Satan would not have said:

(Gen 3:1) Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

If Adam was the spiritual authority over Eve Satan would have not used God's Name but Adam's name as he would have been the one she was to answer spiritually to, being the one placed above her in line of spiritual authority. But God was used, as He was the spiritual authority over Adam and Eve.

This is first and perhaps the best example of the dangers of headship in a family not being in place.

While a man does not have spiritual headship over a wife he has responsibilities to help her keep from sin and grow in the grace and Knowledge of The Lord Jesus the spiritual head of them both and their covering.

People say men are covered by other men but nowhere in the Bible is this arrangement mentioned

If a person has been given protection of another through the laws of the land they are their physical (legal) protection. The person who is their covering can be either male or female as it is to do with man's laws and not God's. The law cannot give a person spiritual covering over another which is why denominations cannot give the right to their minister to be the spiritual covering of a congregation. For the purposes of the domination a minister has legal right over a congregation but for the purposes of the body, of which Jesus is the head, a church (which is part of the body) cannot have anyone else as its head. It can have an overseer but their role is not to rule but to develop and protect spiritually the faith of those in it and not to judge or rule over their faith.

It is because churches confuse denominational authority with the headship of Jesus that the confusion arises and ministers think they have spiritual headship/covering over the body of Christ which worships in their denominational building.

The example of the failed headship of Abraham (Gen 16)

Why does a man fail in headship? Because he ignores what God has said or promised. Abraham disobeyed God as He did not believe the promises of God, his head. He listened to reason and tried to bring the promised heir into existence using the methods his wife suggested (her maid bear him a child).

Failed headship always results in problems. Adam's sin lost paradise and resulted in death for all. Abraham's sin resulted in a son, Ishmael, who has been the enemy of his natural son Isaac for thousands of years resulting in many wars, death and destructions.

Both these men had seen God, had spoken to him yet ignored what God had said or promised to them. Even though they spoke face to face with God they did not believe him!

To fail headship take your focus off Jesus, His Commands and the promises He has made to you and listen to another or Satan as they ask you to do things contrary to what God has asked, promised or said to do.

Like all things God commands you are not judged because you tried and failed but because you purposely did not do what He asked or commanded you to do.

More women have been damaged in the church through imposing spiritual headship on them than through any other abuse of them.

Spiritual headship makes a woman a second class spiritual citizen subservient to man and not God and lesser in spiritual status than a man. How can a woman have self-esteem when she is treated as the spiritual inferior to man who places himself between her and Jesus spiritually.

Treat your wife as a spiritual equal and minister as an equal but protect her as her domestic head if you would have a wife who can be all she can be in Jesus.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.