THE QUESTION

Should Christian women wear a head covering all the time, even at home? Why?

Asked by a THF member on November 19, 2026 · published November 21, 2026 · 10 numbered quotations · the 18 early Christian passages and 78 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/should-christian-women-wear-a-head-covering-all-the-time-even-at-home-why

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Early writers agreed women should cover to pray, but they differed about the home. Clement of Alexandria allows an exception at home, yet says she should pray veiled. John Chrysostom and Tertullian read Paul as calling for a covering at all times. Their reasons include headship, the angels, modesty and humility.

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POINT 1 OF 8

Clement allows an exception at home

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Alexandria tells a Christian woman to be fully covered, but he makes an exception for when she is at home. Even so, he ends by saying it is fitting for her to pray veiled, so prayer stays a special case wherever she is.

1

“Let her be completely covered, unless she happens to be at home.”

later in the same passage

“For this is the wish of the Word, since it is fitting for her to pray veiled.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 3.11 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 2, page 6** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 8

Chrysostom reads Paul as meaning at all times

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

John Chrysostom sees a difference in how Paul speaks to men and women. A man is told to be uncovered only while he prays. But he reads the words about the woman, and the sign of authority because of the angels, as calling for her to be covered continually, not only during prayer.

2

“Well then, he does not force the man to be uncovered at all times, but only when he prays.”

later in the same passage

“But he commands the woman to be covered at all times.”

later in the same passage

“He means that she ought to be covered not only at the time of prayer, but continually also.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on First Corinthians* 26 (c. 386–407 AD) **Source 18, page 7** Read it in the library ›

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POINT 3 OF 8

Tertullian urges being ready in every place

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian closes his work on veiling by saying Christians should be ready at all times and in every place for any mention of God. He links what is in the heart with what is seen on a woman's head, which pushes toward wearing the covering often, not only in church.

3 “Therefore, at all times and in every place, it is our duty to walk mindful of the law, prepared and equipped, in readiness to meet every mention of God. For if He is in the heart, He will be recognized also in the head of women.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On the Veiling of Virgins* 17 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 8, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 8

Headship, nature and the angels explain the difference

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Tertullian lists Paul's reasons by showing why a man is not covered: nature gave him less hair, shaving is not shameful for him, the angels did not sin on his account, and Christ is his head. The woman is covered for the opposite reasons, so the practice rests on God's order, not fashion.

4 “In all these opposite points, the result is that a man is not to cover his head. That is because nature has not given him excess of hair, because it is not shameful for him to be shaven or shorn, because the angels did not transgress on his account, and because Christ is his Head.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On the Veiling of Virgins* 8 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 6, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 8

A humble sign because of the angels

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Explaining Paul's words "because of the angels," Tertullian points to the fallen angels who were drawn by women's beauty. He says it is fitting for a woman to wear a mark of humility that hides that beauty.

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5 “If he means the fallen angels of the Creator, his meaning is very fitting. It is right that the face which was a snare to them should wear some mark of a humble appearance and obscured beauty.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *Against Marcion* 8 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 12, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 8

Modesty protects her and others

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement says the covering is dignified and keeps a woman from being stared at, and helps her keep her modesty. In another place he warns that beauty can become a trap for men. So one reason for the covering is to guard both the woman and the men around her.

6 “For this way of dress is dignified and protects her from being stared at. And she will never fall if she keeps modesty and her shawl before her eyes.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 3.11 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 2, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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7 “For it is an evil thing when beauty becomes a trap for men.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Instructor* 2.11 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 3, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

Humility pleases God more than display

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Tertullian sums up his case by saying God values humility and modesty and dislikes seeking glory and pleasing people. Elsewhere he calls the woman's veil the burden of her own humility. For him the covering is part of a humble Christian life, not decoration.

8 “For nothing is dearer to Him than humility, nothing more acceptable than modesty, and nothing more offensive than glory and the practice of men-pleasing.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On the Veiling of Virgins* 16 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 11, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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9 “She has the burden of her own humility to bear.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *De Corona* 14 **Source 13, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
(c. 196–220 AD)
THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

Every woman is included, not only wives

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Some in Tertullian's day said only married women had to cover. He answers that Paul said "every woman," which takes in every age and condition, so unmarried girls are included too.

10 “And what is "every," except every class, every order, every condition, every dignity, every age? For every means total and entire, lacking in none of its parts.”

later in the same passage

“And the virgin is also a part of the woman.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On the Veiling of Virgins* 8 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 6, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- The passages do not speak with one voice about the home: Clement makes an exception there, while Chrysostom and Tertullian call for more.
- Clement's reason for covering is mainly about being seen by others, and none of these passages says plainly what a woman alone at home and not praying must do.
- These passages are about women; for men, Paul's rule as they read it is to be uncovered when praying.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

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WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 18 early Christian passages and 78 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–18, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 19–79, in Bible order), then 17 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *18 passages from 7 writers*

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · source 1*

1 *Against Heresies: Book I* (on point 5) born out of due time." Similarly, Paul's mention in the same Epistle of "a woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels" supposedly refers… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Instructor* 3.11 (1885 English) **Quotes 1, 6, pages 2, 4** "the woman observe this, further. Let her be entirely covered, unless she happen to be at home… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Instructor* 2.11 (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** "but it is not for the public gaze… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 4–13*

4 *On Prayer* 22 (on point 8) 11:4 As then, in the male sex, under the name of man, even the youth is forbidden to be veiled, so too in the female sex, under the name… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 17 (on point 8) "do not quite reach to the ears. If they are so weak in hearing that they cannot hear through a covering, I pity them. Let them know that the whole… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 8 **Quotes 4, 10, pages 3, 5** his Head. So then, since the apostle is speaking about man and woman, why the latter ought to be veiled, but the former not, it is clear why he has… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 14 (1885 English; on point 8) "is this.) If an uncovered head is a recognised mark of virginity, (then) if any virgin falls from the grace of virginity, she remains permanently with head uncovered for fear… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 17 **Quote 3, page 3** "at all times and in every place, it is our duty to walk mindful of the law, prepared and equipped, in readiness to meet every mention of God. For if… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 12 (1885 English; on point 3) "a veil externally upon her who has (already) a covering internally… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *On Prayer* 21 (1885 English; on point 8) "the apostle has not defined virgins by name, but women, 1 Corinthians 11:5 as to be veiled… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *On the Veiling of Virgins* 16 **Quote 8, page 4** "consists the defense of our opinion, in agreement with Scripture, with Nature, and with Discipline. Scripture founds the law. Nature joins in bearing witness to it. Discipline requires it. Which… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Against Marcion* 8 **Quote 5, page 4** "If he means the fallen angels of the Creator, his meaning is very fitting. It is right that the face which was a snare to them should wear some mark of a humble appearance and obscured beauty." **read ›**

13 *De Corona* 14 **Quote 9, page 5** "She has the burden of her own humility to bear." **read ›**

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Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · source 14*

14 *Treatises* (on point 7) “sets a proper limit for your clothing and ornaments. He said, "Let women adorn themselves with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or expensive… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 15–16*

15 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 6) “downward when you walk abroad, veiling yourself as becomes women… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Apostolic Constitutions* “the women approach with their heads covered, as is… [continues online] **read ›**

Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · source 17*

17 *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* (1885 English; on point 4) being the form which the Deity Himself employs, as the most wise Paul explains: For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image… [continues online] **read ›**

John Chrysostom, *c. 386–407 AD · source 18*

18 *Homilies on First Corinthians* 26 **Quote 2, page 2** “Well then, he does not force the man to be uncovered at all times, but only when he prays.” **read ›**

THE BIBLE *61 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

19 **Genesis 24:65** and said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the plain to meet us?” The servant said, “This is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. **read ›**

20 **Genesis 38:14** So she took off her widow’s garments, put on a veil, adorned herself, and sat by the gates of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, but Judah had not given her to him as a wife. **read ›**

21 **Genesis 38:19** Then she arose and went away, took off her veil, and put on her widow’s garments. **read ›**

22 **Exodus 26:34** And with the veil you shall screen off the ark of the testimony in the holy of holies. **read ›**

23 **Exodus 27:16** For the gate of the court there shall be a screen, twenty cubits in height, of blue, purple, twisted scarlet, and fine twisted linen, with the embroiderer’s varied work; their pillars four, and their bases four. **read ›**

24 **Exodus 28:32** Its opening shall be in the middle, with a border all around the opening, the work of a weaver, with the seam woven in one piece with the robe, so that it may not be torn. **read ›**

25 **Exodus 29:6** You shall put the miter on his head, and put the plate, the Holiness, on the miter. **read ›**

26 **Exodus 34:33** When he had finished speaking to them, he put a veil on his face. **read ›**

27 **Exodus 37:16** He made of gold the furnishings of the table: the dishes, the incense pans, the cups, and the bowls with which drink offerings are poured. (Septuagint Exodus 38:12 (Exodus 37:16 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

28 **Exodus 38:8** He made the bronze washbasin and its bronze base from the mirrors of the women who fasted, who fasted by the doors of the tabernacle of witness on the day he set up the tabernacle. (Septuagint Exodus 38:26 (Exodus 38:8 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

29 **Exodus 39:34** and all the furnishings of the tabernacle and all its tools, and the skins—rams’ skins dyed red—and the blue coverings, and the coverings of the other things, and the pegs, and all the tools for the works of the tabernacle of witness. (Septuagint Exodus 39:21 (Exodus 39:34 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

30 **Exodus 40:3** You shall put the ark of the testimony in place and cover the ark with the veil. **read ›**

31 **Leviticus 10:6** Then Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left, “You shall not uncover your heads, nor shall you tear your garments, so that you do not die and wrath does not come upon all the congregation. But your brothers, the whole house of Israel, shall weep for the burning with which they were burned by the Lord. **read ›**

32 **Leviticus 14:47** Whoever sleeps in the house shall wash his garments and be unclean until evening; and whoever eats in the house shall wash his garments and be unclean until evening. **read ›**

33 **Leviticus 18:17** You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter; you shall not take that woman’s son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter to uncover their nakedness, for they are your close relatives; it is ungodliness. **read ›**

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34 **Leviticus 19:27** You shall not cut the hair of your head into a round tuft, nor spoil the appearance of your beard. **read ›**

35 **Numbers 4:13** He shall put the cover on the altar, and they shall spread over it a cloth wholly of purple. **read ›**

36 **Numbers 4:25** They shall carry the skins of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of witness, its cover, the blue covering that is on top of it, and the cover of the door of the tabernacle of witness, **read ›**

37 **Numbers 5:18** And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head, and put into her hands the sacrifice of memorial, the sacrifice of jealousy; and in the priest's hand shall be this water of proof that brings the curse. **read ›**

38 **Numbers 6:5** all the days of his purification. No razor shall come upon his head until the days that he vowed to the Lord are fulfilled; he shall be holy, letting the hair of his head grow long, **read ›**

39 **Numbers 30:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

40 **Deuteronomy 14:1** You are sons of the Lord your God. You shall not make any baldness between your eyes for the dead, **read ›**

41 **Deuteronomy 21:12** and you bring her into your house, then you shall shave her head and trim her nails, **read ›**

42 **Deuteronomy 22:5** A man's articles shall not be on a woman, nor shall a man ever put on a woman's robe; for everyone who does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God. **read ›**

43 **Deuteronomy 28:56** And the tender and pampered woman among you, whose foot has never ventured to step on the ground because she is so pampered and tender, shall look with a grudging eye on the husband she holds close, and on her son and her daughter, **read ›**

44 **1 Samuel 1:12** As she went on praying before the Lord, Eli the priest watched her mouth. **read ›**

45 **2 Samuel 17:19** And the woman took a covering and spread it over the mouth of the pit, and spread ground grain on it to dry; and nothing was known. **read ›**

46 **1 Chronicles 10:10** They put their armor in the house of their god, and his head they put in the house of Dagon. **read ›**

47 **2 Chronicles 4:12** two pillars, and on them the bowls of the caps on the tops of the two pillars, and two networks to cover the tops of the caps that are on the tops of the pillars; **read ›**

48 **Ezra 4:22** so that, by the decree, you may be on your guard against negligence in this matter, lest destruction increase to the harm of kings." **read ›**

49 **Job 8:5** But rise early and pray to the Lord Almighty. **read ›**

50 **Job 10:3** Is it good for you if I do wrong? For you have rejected the works of your hands, and paid attention to the counsel of the ungodly. **read ›**

51 **Job 12:6** all who provoke the Lord, as though there will be no examination of them. **read ›**

52 **Job 12:15** If he holds back the water, he will dry up the earth; and if he lets it loose, he has overturned and destroyed it. **read ›**

53 **Job 16:8** It has become a witness, and my falsehood has risen up in me; it has answered against me to my face. **read ›**

54 **Ecclesiastes 3:19** And indeed to them belongs the event of the sons of man and the event of the beast; one event is theirs. As the death of the one, so also the death of the other; and there is one breath for all. And what advantage has the man over the beast? None; for all is vanity. **read ›**

55 **Isaiah 3:19** and the necklace, and the ornament of their faces, **read ›**

56 **Isaiah 3:23** and the fine linen ones, and the blue ones, and scarlet ones, and the fine linen woven together with gold and blue, and the light coverings for couches. **read ›**

57 **Isaiah 25:7** they will anoint themselves with perfumed oil on this mountain. Hand over all these things to the nations, for this counsel is upon all the nations. **read ›**

58 **Isaiah 32:11** Be amazed, be grieved, you who are confident; strip yourselves, become bare, wrap your waists, **read ›**

59 **Ezekiel 13:18** and you shall say: Thus says the Lord: Woe to the women who sew pillows under every elbow of the hand, and make coverings for every head of every age, to turn souls aside! The souls of my people were turned aside, and they kept souls alive for themselves. **read ›**

60 **Daniel 4:9** "Belteshazzar, chief of the enchanters, I know that the Holy Spirit of God is in you, and no mystery is too hard for you: hear the vision of the dream that I saw, and tell me its interpretation. **read ›**

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61 **Hosea 9:8** The watchman of Ephraim is with God; the prophet is a crooked trap in all his ways; they have fixed madness in the house of God. **read ›**

62 **Susanna 1:32** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

63 **Luke 3:5** Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall become straight, and the rough ways shall become smooth roads. **read ›**

64 **Luke 13:4** Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were worse offenders than all the people who dwell in Jerusalem? **read ›**

65 **Acts 3:22** For Moses indeed said to the fathers, ‘The Lord our God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers; him you shall hear in everything he speaks to you. **read ›**

66 **Romans 9:16** So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy. **read ›**

67 **Romans 9:19** You will say then to me, “Why does he still find fault? For who withstands his will?” **read ›**

68 **1 Corinthians 5:2** And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, so that the one who did this deed might be removed from among you. **read ›**

69 **1 Corinthians 11:4** Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. **read ›**

70 **1 Corinthians 11:5** But every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonors her head. For it is one and the same thing as if she were shaved. **read ›**

71 **1 Corinthians 11:6** For if a woman is not covered, let her hair also be cut off. But if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or be shaved, let her be covered. **read ›**

72 **1 Corinthians 11:7** For a man indeed ought not to have his head covered, because he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. **read ›**

73 **1 Corinthians 11:10** For this reason the woman ought to have authority on her head, because of the angels. **read ›**

74 **1 Corinthians 11:13** Judge for yourselves: is it fitting for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? **read ›**

75 **2 Corinthians 2:10** Now I also forgive anyone to whom you forgive anything. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, **read ›**

76 **1 Timothy 2:9** Likewise, I desire that women adorn themselves in orderly clothing, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothing, **read ›**

77 **1 Timothy 2:10** but with good works, which is appropriate for women professing godliness. **read ›**

78 **Titus 2:5** to be sober-minded, pure, keepers of the home, good, subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed. **read ›**

79 **1 Peter 3:5** For this is how in the past the holy women who hoped in God also adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *17 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Genesis 2:23 · 6:1

Matthew 6:5 · 10:26 · 12:36

Acts 20:28

1 Corinthians 4:7 · 7:34 · 11:3 · 11:14 · 11:16

2 Corinthians 10:13

Philippians 3:19

1 Thessalonians 5:21

1 Peter 1:19 · 2:9

Revelation 14:4

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Should Christian women wear a head covering all the time, even at home? Why?” on November 19, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 21, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY