

Intro:

Main Point of Text: God forbids His people to shave hair off their heads and faces to identify together in submission to Him.

Sermon Point: *Godly Grooming Gives a Witness.*

Move 1: Your heads give a witness.

Hairstyles communicate an identity that is always corporate in nature. Like the *Egyptians*: to identify w/ their sun god, Ra, they shaved off hair from temple to temple around the back of their heads to create a circle on top. Other ancient pagans did similarly to represent a connection to their celestial, heavenly deities with a hairstyle reflecting a hemisphere or globe. This is the text's context. Hebrew for "round" literally is "surround" or "go around" (Joshua 6:3); sometimes "strike off" or "cut down" (Isa. 10:34). Hebrew for "corners" is "sides" (Ex. 27:9), also used for "borders" of a garden (Lev. 19:9), "corners of field" (Lev. 23:22). Assumes hair and restricts how it can shaped: not fashioned as ungodly. 1 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:3-4.

Move 2: Your faces give a witness.

Egyptians shaved their faces, shaped goatees, obsessed with being hairless. Their priests shaved their whole bodies several times a week, and plucked out their eyebrows and eyelashes. Only the lowly of society wore full beards (often outlawed). The Israelites had been brought out of Egypt and were not to be confused for *Egyptians*: context of the text. Hebrew for "corners" is "sides", like North side of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:20) or North or South sides of boundary lines of tribal territories (Num. 35:5; Ezek. 47:17, 19): the outlines of an area; here, the man's face (cheeks as well as chin). The sides of the beard are not the subject of marring, but the sides of the face that the beard was to cover and preserve God's image (Gen. 1:26-27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Hebrew for "mar" is literally "spoil" or "ruin" and is translated elsewhere in the Bible as "corrupt" (Gen. 6:12), "destroy" (Gen. 6:17), and "spill" (Gen. 38:9). Here, it means remove, cut off, or shave off and make naked a connecting part of a man's normal beard area. Beards on men in the Bible are assumed (e.g., 2 Sam. 20:9) —so here, just like this legislation assumes you have hair on your head. Hebrew for "beard" same root as "elders" (Ex. 19:7).

Move 3: Your witness is your identity.

God wants to protect us from our own identity crisis as Christians. Ex. 20:2: brought out of Egyptian slavery. Israelites not to look like their old masters, but a peculiar people going into another Pagan Land to transform it into a free Promised Land (Deut. 26:18; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). Their separate spirituality must stand out visibly: Lev. 18:1-4, 26-30; 19:1-2, 37. Shaving hair/beard in the Bible was related to foreign slavery (Gen. 41:14); leprosy (Lev. 14:8-9); humiliation (2 Sam. 10:4-5); and God's judging punishment, Isa. 7:20: *In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired ... the head ... and it shall also consume the beard.* (See also Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:37; Ezek. 5:1). Ps. 133:2: oil dripping down Aaron's beard is a sign of God's blessing and Christian brotherhood. Jesus' beard identifies with you for your salvation, Isa. 50:6: *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ...* 1 Pet. 1:13-16. The appeal in 1 Cor. 11 for men to have short hair and women long hair is to continue the Church's (churches) corporate tradition against the world's constantly changing fashion culture (vss. 2, 16). Whether men or women, head or face, it shows your submission to God and Christ's headship (1 Cor. 11:1-16). Publicly and privately. Summary of the text: 1 Thess. 5:22: *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

Conclusion:

Godly Grooming Gives a Witness.