

What does the Bible say about facial hair?

UPDATE (6/5/2008): Because of some of the feedback on this article, I fear that I may have been misunderstood. I would like to clarify that, to my knowledge, no UPC or UPC-affiliated church teaches that facial hair itself is a sin. However, every UPC or UPC-affiliated church that I have attended has taught against facial hair for one of two reasons. The first reason is that many of them have said that facial hair is a sign of rebellion (because of those who used to grow beards out of rebellion in the 1960s). The second reason that facial hair has been taught against is because it offends so many people who are against facial hair.

I think it is only fair to add that I have attended some churches who allowed members to have mustaches.

I hope this clarifies what I am saying in this article.

Many churches in the UPC teach against having facial hair. I do not know if that position is officially endorsed by the UPC, but I do know that every UPC church I have been in taught against facial hair for one reason or another. The question is, "What does the Bible say about having facial hair?"

The only rule concerning facial hair in the Bible is found in Lev. 19:27, which says, 'You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard' (NASB). It is possible that God gave this law in response to the customs of Israel's pagan neighbors ((Youngblood, R. F., Bruce, F. F., Harrison, R. K., & Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary*. Rev. ed. of: Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.; Includes index. Nashville: T. Nelson.)), but, regardless of the reasons for the law, it no longer applies to us today.

Aside from Lev. 19:27, nothing is said in the Bible for or against beards. It is a non-issue Biblically.

So why do so many UPC churches teach against facial hair? The reason that I have always heard is that facial hair is a sign of rebellion. This dates back to the 1960s, when it was presumably fashionable for young men to grow beards as a sign of protest of the Vietnam War. My response to this argument is that, while it may have been a sign of rebellion 50 years ago for a man to grow a beard, it is no longer a sign of rebellion today. Since the Bible does not say anything for or against beards, there is no reason why men should not be allowed to grow them today.