

“The Beard, Beyond No-Shave November”

by: Daniel Anderson



The eleventh month for some is known as no-shave November. For women, this is quite gross and culturally unacceptable (using this as an excuse to grow out their leg hair). For men, this means letting the current beard grow wildly or finally allowing yourself to reveal the amount of facial hair you'll produce this year.

Dr. Tully Borland treats the beard with a little more respect and thinks it befitting of a man's face. "I think that it's, at the very least, appropriate for a man to grow a beard. And once he gets to a certain age though, he really ought to consider the beard and whether or not he ought to grow it and exactly how far he ought to grow it. And, you know, he's got to ask his wife, of course, to see how far he can grow his beard."

The beard is not the boss, and an untamed beard can seem preposterous and at times hard to look at. Dr. Borland agrees that it is nice to have order to the beard. "If you trim it just enough, keeping some sort of orderly appearance to it, then it looks a little bit more like you're wise and you've got a little bit of control of your own manliness that is trying to get out."

Beard as a verb

"Sometimes we focus on the beard itself, but beard can actually be a verb. So in the Oxford English dictionary, back in the 16th century, the infinitive of 'to beard' means this: 'To oppose openly and resolutely, with daring or with effrontery; to set at defiance, thwart, affront.' For example, to beard the lion in his den or lair."

Dr. Borland goes beyond the faces month-long extension to reveal the importance of the every day beard, as well as how 'to beard.' "In our culture of gender confusion, men getting pedicures and wearing 'skinny jeans,' we might do well to recover the potentially frightening quality of masculinity. Not unlike Aslan, the man with the beard just might 'beard' you at any moment. I'd love nothing more than to hear someone say, because I've got a beard, that 'He is not a tame man, but he is good.'"