

Feminism

- I. For at least fifty years, there has been an increased emphasis on women's rights and the terms women's rights movement, feminist movement, women's liberation, etc., have become part of our cultural jargon coincidental with an increased struggle between the sexes.
 - A. What is a Christian approach to feminism?
 - B. Does Scripture address the issue?
 - C. This study seeks to sort out the good and bad of the feminist movement.

- II. Definitions.
 - A. feminism: Advocacy of the rights of women (based on the theory of equality of the sexes). (*O.E.D.*)
 - B. feminism: The theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1974).
 - C. feminism: A theory, cult, or movement on the part of those who assert and advocate what they consider the rights of women, and who favor doing away with all social, economic, and political restrictions on the sex. (*Webster's Universities Dictionary*, 1940)
 - D. equality: The condition of being equal in quantity, amount, value, intensity, etc.

- III. Let it be noted that Scripture recognizes the worth of women and their equality before God's law and His grace. **GAL 3:28**.
 - A. Male and female saints alike are accountable to God's law. **1CO 7:3-4**.
 - B. Male and female saints alike have a right to baptism, receiving instruction, the Lord's Table, church votes, etc.
 - C. "With great reason the apostle introduces this. Between the privileges of men and women there was a great disparity among the Jews. A man might shave his head, and rend his clothes in the time of mourning; a woman was not permitted to do so. A man might impose the vow of nasirate upon his son; a woman could not do this on her daughter. A man might be shorn on account of the nasirate of his father; a woman could not. A man might betroth his daughter; a woman had no such power. A man might sell his daughter; a woman could not. In many cases they were treated more like children than adults; and to this day are not permitted to assemble with the men in the synagogues, but are put up in galleries, where they can scarcely see, nor can they be seen. Under the blessed spirit of Christianity, they have equal rights, equal privileges, and equal blessings; and, let me add, they are equally useful." (Adam Clarke Commentary on **GAL 3:28**)
 - D. "There is no distinction into male and female. Difference of sex makes no difference in Christian privileges. But under the law the male sex had great privileges. Males alone had in their body circumcision, the sign of the covenant (contrast baptism applied to male and female alike); they alone were capable of being kings and priests, whereas all of either sex are now "kings and priests unto God" (Rev 1:6); they had prior right to inheritances. In the resurrection the relation of the sexes shall cease (Luk 20:35)." (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary on **GAL 3:28**)
 - E. "One sex is not to be regarded as the special favorite of heaven, and the other to be excluded. Christianity thus elevates the female sex to an equality with the male, on the most important of all interests; and it has in this way made most important changes in the world wherever it has prevailed. Everywhere but in connection with the Christian religion, woman has been degraded. She has been kept in ignorance. She has been treated as an

inferior in all respects. She has been doomed to unpitied drudgery, and ignorance, and toil. So she was among the ancient Greeks and Romans; so she is among the savages of America; so she is in China, and India, and in the islands of the sea; so she is regarded in the Koran, and in all Muslim countries. It is Christianity alone which has elevated her; and nowhere on earth does man regard the mother of his children as an intelligent companion and friend, except where the influence of the Christian religion has been felt. At the communion table, at the foot of the cross, and in the hopes of heaven, she is on a level with man; and this fact diffuses a mild, and purifying, and elevating influence over all the relations of life.” (Albert Barnes Commentary on **GAL 3:28**).

- D. The assumption, though, that such equality implies also that there are no distinctions in other areas of life for males and females, is contrary to Scripture and this is where the battle lines are drawn.
1. Wives are to be subordinate to husbands, their heads. **EPH 5:22-24**.
 2. Ordination is restricted to qualified men. **1TI 2:12; 3:1-2, 12**.
 3. Women are to be silent in the church service. **1CO 14:34; 1TI 2:11**.
 4. Men bear the primary responsibility of breadwinning. **1TI 5:8**.
 5. Woman was created for the man. **1CO 11:9**.
 6. Woman’s primary concern is domestic. **1TI 5:14; TIT 2:5**.
 7. Woman is the weaker vessel. **1PE 3:7**.
 8. Scripture forbids blurring of lines between the sexes in appearance and manners. **DEU 22:5; 1CO 6:9; 11:10-15**.
- E. Scripture warns against fighting nature itself. **1CO 11:14; ROM 1:26**.
1. The more radical forms of feminism essentially are trying to deny the obvious facts of life by insisting that women can and should do everything that a man can do.
 2. The marketplace rightfully insists on hiring the right person for a job and sometimes the only right person is a man. The NFL doesn’t recruit from Victoria’s Secret.
 3. Radical feminists hold a double-standard often in this area: demanding equal access to obviously male-oriented specialties while also demanding that the criteria for the specialty be modified to accommodate their inadequacy. In other words, equal but with special privileges that others are not given.
 4. The folly of this is terribly obvious in military, law enforcement, or life-saving professions.
- IV. It would be incorrect to assume that all who subscribe to feminist ideals are of the same stripe.
- A. “First, we should define feminism, since the term can have different meanings for different people. Basically, feminism is a philosophy that advocates equal rights for women and men—socially, politically, economically, and in other ways. Early feminists fought for and won suffrage for women. Today’s feminism goes further than demanding equal treatment of men and women, however. Modern feminists fight for language equality (saying “chairperson” instead of “chairman,” even if the person in question is male) and gender equality (redefining femininity and masculinity). The more radical feminists actively seek to overthrow any vestige of male dominance in society, to the point of opposing the biblical roles of husbands and wives, defending abortion on demand, and promoting lesbianism. Radical feminists deny there is any difference between men and women, teaching that any perceived differences between the sexes are due solely to social conditioning.” (www.gotquestions.org)

- B. “A woman who claims to be a feminist could affiliate with one or more of the following camps: Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Marxist and Socialist Feminism, Moderate Feminism, Postmodern Feminism, Separatist Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Eco-Feminism.” (www.girldefined.com)
- C. The more extreme forms of feminism go far beyond the simple struggle for political, economic, and social equality of the sexes. Women’s suffrage is a tip of an iceberg for these.
1. “...Feminism has rejected God as the ultimate authority for life and instead placed herself on the throne. The god of feminism pridefully says, “I know better than God and will live out my womanhood how I think is best...In addition to not liking God’s design for gender, equality feminism stands for far more than it’s friendly name suggests. If you do a little homework you’ll quickly discover how many other “women’s rights” issues equality feminism promotes. Let’s dive beneath the surface to see how big and narley this iceberg really is. (www.girldefined.com)
 2. “Right NOW (today) almost all feminist groups strongly stand for the following:
 - a. A woman’s right to abort (murder) her unborn baby.
 - b. Lesbianism and the right for women to marry women.
 - c. Complete liberation from sexual boundaries and morals.
 - d. Freedom from traditional gender roles in marriage.
 - e. Rejection of God as the ultimate authority in life.”(www.girldefined.com)
 3. “The direction of feminism took a turn in the early 1960s. Where the early feminists wanted biblical femininity celebrated, the "Second Wave" wanted it ignored. Socially, politically, and economically, they wanted no distinction between men and women. Gradually, lies crept in that convinced women that they were both no different than men and that they would be better living independently from men.” (<https://www.compellingtruth.org/feminism-Christian-feminist.html>)
 4. Their struggle is far more than one of empowering women: it is a power struggle to dethrone God, males and a perceived patriarchal bias, and gain political and legislative power for the furthering of antichrist agenda in the culture.