



T A B L E T A L K

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Christian Feminism (or "Behind Every Successful Woman is a Man")

by John C. Moore

If idolatry is the ultimate Christian sacrilege, corrupting the true value of man and woman was the first historic act of idolatry. Christians who are confused about the true value of women participate in our culture's lie about both God and man. From a man's perspective, even the bare and narrow self-serving perspective honors something of the value of woman: *Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself* (Eph. 5:28). Beyond that logical base, a biblical review of God's view of Eve and her progeny should cause every male to appreciate their sacred feminine roots.

We are a culture in confusion. To some, the place of the woman is only in the home, submissive and quiet, and looking primarily to the man for determining her significance and place. Many conservative Christians believe a variation on this theme. Others demand that the woman assert herself dominantly in the home and workplace, and God fulfillment only when she has relationally and professionally replaced the man who has subjugated her. Lesbianism is an extreme expression of this idea.

Three Counterfeit Views of Women Women as Commonly Created Without Uniqueness

Just as our culture more often rejects a caricature of Christianity rather than the real deal, so our culture accepts the counterfeit over the genuine in our views of male and female. Two facts are obvious in a reading of Genesis, that God is the Author of every created thing, and that God's greatest creative expression is poetically and uniquely expressed in woman in the garden. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good* (Genesis 1:27-31).

In Genesis, woman is a "very good" and magnificent work of art without duplication and equaled only by the creation of the

man. The full Godhead celebrates this created order in its image and likeness! Just as man finds his God-ordained place only by understanding his place under God and alongside woman, even so woman finds her regal position by understanding her created genius in relation to man and by God. Christians err by hurrying into the theological bastions of male leadership without first and more importantly affirming and standing on the majesty of God's created order, which included woman.

Practically expressed, men should be at the forefront of groups that honor their mothers, their wives, their sisters and their daughters. Promise Keepers seem to be one group that works in those areas. Our churches and schools should emphasize leadership skills and opportunities for young women. Husbands should allocate regular time and resources for honoring their wives. Fathers should creatively work on their schedules in a way that provides regular time for their daughters, not just their sons. Encouraging girls in academic, athletic and leadership skills is an act of worship pleasing to God, and an encouragement for our daughters to be all that God intended for them as daughters of Eve.

Women as Independent Actors Without Accountability

In the last 20 years, feminism had been radicalized by a small core group who demand that women can only find their place by separating themselves from any dependence or direction from their male counterparts — be it the church, the home or the marketplace. The Scriptures bring our moral compass back to true center on this question: *In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman for as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God* (1 Cor. 11:11-12).

Our country has not corrected the evils of racism with legislative quotas and busing. Likewise, we cannot correct the historical discrimination of women, whether outside the church or in our

pews, by politicizing woman, or by creating a new feminine breed seeking power and autonomy apart from sons of Adam.

Practically speaking, women should voluntarily gauge their actions and opinions by counsel from others — including counsel from husbands, fathers, brothers and Christian leaders. A woman's first instruction comes from God and the Scriptures, which is her Source. This same woman checks her decisions by counsel from others, as should every man. Just as God directed the plurality of elders and deacons for the leadership of his Church, even so God has directed that man and woman are interdependent on each other for wise living. Good life decisions never come from isolated thinking. Lessons from the garden of Eden evidence that woman has a potential fatal disposition to live independent of man even as man has a similar fatal disposition to willfully disobey the clear instruction of God.

Women as Submissive Without Honor

When considering the place of Christian feminism, the doctrine of submission is at the forefront of theological abuses against women: *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ* (Eph. 5:21). Fathers, husbands and pastors have hammered women with the club of submission without careful and equal recognition of their status as no less than co-equals, members of the brotherhood, and joint heirs of the grace of God. Just as every man was born of the womb of a woman, owing their very lives to their mother, even so every man is obligated to holding up their mother, wives, sisters and daughters in an honorable place. The godly man finishes first in this race by running behind woman, and committing himself to a servant-like life of honoring women before himself.

Practical implications of this truth include the priority of education and career for our daughters and wives. Educational and professional training for a woman is not mutually exclusive or contrary to an honored season of life as wife and mother, with a period of time where this woman has her primary workplace a the home with her young children. Our marriages and churches are diminished by an attitude that relegates women to the home without broader education or contribution. Likewise, older women are without equal for the training and encouragement of our younger women, and the Scriptures challenge the churches to create staff positions for these women and widows in their invaluable work in the community.

Gender and roles are too often the secularized golden rule: the ones with the gold make all the rules. In other words, power predominates over theology. Our churches and our country still

wait for the wise Christian man and woman who looks first for direction to God, as progeny of Adam and Eve, and secondly to each other, with men deferring in humility to the valued and equal contribution of the woman in matters of marriage, family and career, remembering that God is the beginning, middle and end of this question.

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