

Introduction: “Feminism” is not a dirty word.

Definition:

“Feminism is the principle that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to men.”

The roots of feminism:

History – in pagan cultures, including Greek and Roman culture, women were massively exploited. They were equal to or less than slaves in those cultures. They were bought, sold, traded, and were considered objects and not people.

The greatest women’s liberator was Jesus Christ.

The radical 60’s belief system:

1. The source of society’s ills is patriarchy or **MALE** domination.
2. “Equality” means **SAMENESS**.
3. Hierarchy or role differences implies **INEQUALITY**.
4. Feminine autonomy is the prerequisite of personal **FULFILLMENT**.
5. Motherhood and child-rearing is a **CURSE**, not a **PRIVILEGE**.
6. Significance is determined by professional **ACCOMPLISHMENT**.
7. Family and religion are man-made institutions that **EXPLOIT** women.

Feminism and the Bible

The impact of the radical feminist belief system:

1. A **BLURRING** of the gender roles.
2. Women in the workforce:
Positive - The **EQUAL RIGHTS** amendment.
Negative - Marriage, motherhood, and child-rearing are **DEVALUED**.
3. Hierarchy of any kind is exploitive and **INTOLERANT**.
4. Egalitarianism, or equality in every way, is **POLITICALLY CORRECT**.
5. Careerism and **PERSONAL** fulfillment are the ultimate achievements.
6. Women's roles have been redefined in:
MARRIAGE, the **CHURCH**, the **BUSINESS** world, and **SOCIETY** in general.

Question 1: What does Scripture teach about gender issues?

Absolute #1: Men and women are **EQUAL** in God's sight.

Genesis 1:27

Galatians 3:28

Absolute #2: Men and women are **NOT IDENTICAL**.

Genesis 2:19-25

Feminism and the Bible

Absolute #3: God's reason for designing roles in marriage, is never for **COMPETITION**, but for: unity, oneness, completion, and mutual fulfillment.

Ephesians 5:22-27

Women - Submission is a voluntary response to God's design, in relationship with your husband.

Men - Leadership is the courage to love and care for your wife, as Jesus does for the Church.

Absolute #4: Role differences are designed to produce relational **UNITY** and a spiritual **TESTIMONY**.

Ephesians 5:30-33

Question 2: What does Scripture teach about the role of women in the Church?

Worship in the Church

1 Corinthians 11

1. In the New Testament Church, women fully participate in worship.
2. Men and women demonstrate signs of being under spiritual authority respectively.
3. Women and men are different but they are interdependent - God is the ultimate authority for both.

Feminism and the Bible

God's design in services vs. chaotic practices

1 Corinthians 14

The goal is edification of all, order, and unity.

1. In light of 1 Corinthians 11, and the New Testament practice, this can't mean absolute silence.
2. The context makes it clear that it's disruptive speech that is forbidden, not any speaking in a church by women.
3. The context concerns the prohibition of authoritative and doctrinal judgments or speech where spiritual authority is the issue.

¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

1 Timothy 2:11-15

1. *Silent*, here, means with a quiet disposition or attitude, not to refrain completely from speaking.
2. *To teach or to have authority over* is a grammatically singular concept, thus, teaching by a woman that exercises authority over a man is prohibited.
3. The rationale for the authority issue is not the culture of the first century. In each of these passages, Paul goes back to the divine design: Adam/Eve creation order.

Conclusion: The Bible is clear - the qualifications for an elder are all male-related because God holds the elders morally responsible for what happens in the Church.

Therefore, women may serve anywhere except the role of an elder or functioning as an elder. "Functioning" means teaching systematically in mixed groups over a prolonged period of time where the very nature of the job of the pastor determines her as the authority.

The goal isn't limitation. It's fulfilling potential.