

Masculine Christianity – Lesson 2

The Rise of Feminism – Part 1

Read the Introduction (pgs. vii-xiii)

1. (a) Why did Garris write a *popular* work to address his subject? What specifically is his *intention* in this book (pg. viii, para. 2)?

Garris wrote this book because he found that most books dealing with this are either popular-level books with minimal interaction with Scripture, or academic-level books that are of little interest to ordinary Christians. He also found the book *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* to lack cohesion and to deviate from some historic Christian views. He wrote this book to bridge that gap: to provide a *biblical* defense of historic, masculine Christianity that is approachable by average believers.

- (b) On pg. viii, what does Garris mean by calling the book *anti-feminist and patriarchal*?

Anti-feminist, for Garris, means that the book stands *against* the typical feminist/egalitarian perspective of most books written on the subject of gender roles, and affirms the historic interpretations by refuting the feminist revisions to that history. It is patriarchal because it goes *beyond* the “complementarian” literature by affirming historic teachings that have been abandoned, including the teaching that male authority is rooted in the differing natures of men and women and that there is a hierarchy of rank (but not value) between them.

- (c) How does Garris view *complementarianism* (pgs. viii-x)? Very simply (and by way of introduction), what are some of the problems he sees with it?

Garris believes that complementarianism has been “compromised” by feminist and egalitarian thinking. It is weak, in that it does not affirm the teaching of male authority *in every area of life* and that it *ignores* the reality of a hierarchy established by God based on the natures of male and female. He also believes that complementarianism does not go far enough: it limits its affirmations *to the family and the church*, but does not take those concepts out into society, thus fueling sexual confusion in the general culture. Modern complementarianism, he contends, actually *apologizes* to the culture for the “abuses” of patriarchy, and winds up limiting itself in order to be viewed “fairly” by the wider society.

- (d) How does Garris *define* the terms “sex” and “gender” (pgs. x-xi)? Does Garris assume a connection between the terms? If so, how is that *different* from our culture today?

Sex, Garris explains, is the biologically-determined reality of a person, conceived either as male or female. Gender is a social expression of this biological basis (i.e. masculine or feminine). However, Garris notes that many “disconnect” the terms, implying that one can *identify* as a gender different from his/her sex. Western culture insists that people can identify *outside* of their biological sex; in transgenderism, they can be of a physical nature that is biologically of one sex, but then identify in their roles and duties as the other (or, as one of many “artificial” genders). Garris argues that the Bible roots gender expression in biological sex; that gender roles are based on one’s biological nature. In other words, the Bible insists that men must act like men, and vice versa. For Garris, then, gender roles would also include concepts like “tasks” and “duties” which are basically masculine or feminine, and assigned to be performed by the *biological sex* associated with them.

2. Why does Garris use the term “masculine” to *title* the book (pgs. xi-xiii)? What is his *definition* of masculine Christianity?

Garris asserts that God has put men (not women!) into places of leadership, because that is *fundamental* to his revealed nature as God (i.e. as Father and Son), and that masculinity, in the Bible, is associated with strength, authority, responsibility, and mission. Thus, God appoints men to lead the church, home, and society. There is a masculine bent to Christianity, and Garris calls the church to return to its masculine calling; to throw off the deep influence feminism has had on the church and for (Christian) men to act according to God’s design.

Read Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-4)

3. (a) From pgs. 1-2, how does Garris diagnose the state of *masculinity* in America today?

Masculinity, Garris asserts, is *in peril*. Women are becoming the most important sex in society, in everything from college degrees, to full-time jobs, and even to becoming the primary breadwinner in the home. This comes at the expense of children and the family, and women now *compete* with men in the same tasks. Thus, fewer men are pursuing education, many are not in the workplace at all, and there are high rates of divorce, incarceration, loneliness, addiction, and suicide amongst them. Many men have decided, as a result, to forego traditional marriage and children. In other words, men are no longer acting like men, and the concept of masculinity is being replaced with femininity, *even amongst men themselves*.

- (b) List some of the *results* of this collapse of masculinity. Which *do you think* is the most dire?

The results of this collapse include the issues listed above (see 3a), as well as the breakdown of the family, and the suffering of women as they are left vulnerable and are being *used* sexually rather than committed to in marriage. This has also made its way into the church, which has been weakened by the breakdown of the family. The rise of the welfare state, to provide financial assistance to children born outside of marriage. This has, then, *rewarded* bad practices, and usurped the charity role traditionally reserved for the church. Additionally, women now see themselves fully authorized to pursue leadership positions in the church traditionally held by men, with many denominations openly ordaining women as pastors, thus undermining the authority of both the Bible and church history. This weakening of the church is (to me!) the most dire: churches that begin by abandoning the clear teaching of Scripture on gender roles, then actively work to elevate women to positions reserved for men, results in churches that *no longer hold the authority to teach the most fundamental aspects of Christianity*. In other words, the weakened church no longer has the authority to call men and women to repentance and faith; its gospel is weakened to the point where *it cannot save anyone*.

4. (a) From pgs. 2-4, how does Garris define *feminism*? How does it relate to *equality*?

Garris defines feminism as: the position that women can and should carry out the same functions as men in society. Feminism works to minimize all sex differences and actively works to push women *away* from the home and children into careers *just like men*. Feminism teaches that men and women are *fundamentally the same* (i.e. that they are equal), and that they are interchangeable. This teaching has become the *de facto* ideology in the West, and Americans now live in a post-feminist society, taking *for granted* this ideology in every aspect of life.

- (b) What does Garris see as the *target* of feminism, specifically? What is its ultimate *goal*? Why?

The goal of feminism, Garris argues, is to “create a society in which women behave as much like men as possible” so that women will “hold equal political and economic power with men.” The objective is to make it so that women are *equal* to men (or, maybe, a bit *higher*), and then push women into every position that would normally be assumed for a man. This, feminists claim, will usher in *true equality*; no longer will women be considered the “weaker sex,” but will hold onto the “levers of power” in much the same way as men. The “why” is power: feminists seek to wrest power wherever they believe it has been “denied” to them, and then to use that power to make the life of a woman “better” than it was in the past.

(c) What does Garris list as some of the *methods* used by feminists to usher in this gender equality?

A number of methods have been used by feminists, Garris notes, to usher in this equality: the promotion of the sexual revolution, the support of no-fault divorce, and affirmative action programs. Garris also quotes F. Carolyn Graglia as promoting the “status degradation” of the housewife’s role, as a means to getting women to despise it, so that women will want to push away from it and pursue careers outside the home.

(d) From the top of pg. 4, what are the two (2) *flawed assumptions* of feminism, in Garris’ opinion?

The two flawed assumptions are: 1) that equality means sameness (i.e. that men and women are “the same” thus they must be allowed to do the same things), and 2) that differences between men and women are only imposed *by culture* (i.e. that the differences are not “real” or biological, but are “constructs” created by the culture to keep one sex “under” the other). These two assumptions are flawed because 1) sameness is *inherently* illogical (given that God has created two separate sexes *for a reason*) and 2) that those differences *cannot* be culturally based, since they have existed *in every culture throughout history*. Note: transgenderism, as an ideology, has “driven a stake” into this thinking: feminism taught that being a woman was every bit as good as being a man, but (now!) a transgender “woman” is actually a man, thus *undermining* the inherent value of women as men “takeover” even their sex!

5. If feminism’s *goal* is to “minimize sex distinctions” (pg. 3), what does this push women into *becoming*, and why is this a *bad thing*?

Minimizing sex distinctions can only mean that *women become men*. By convincing women that they can only be “fulfilled” by leaving the home (and the great honor of being wives and mothers) to pursue the life of a man (in career, politics, sexual exploits, etc.), it results in them *becoming what they are pursuing*: to becoming men, and then being asked (or forced?) to carry the responsibility that men were *created* to carry for *them* (i.e. to become protectors and providers). This is a *terrible thing* because, in God’s wisdom, women were designed for the specific role of being wives and mothers, and they will never find that “fulfillment” when they try to achieve *what they were never designed to achieve*. It also means that such a society will, invariably, collapse: the loss of wives and mothers invariably leads to a lower fertility rate and the number of children born to such a culture wanes, thus the culture cannot *self-replicate* and its resources go to a larger and larger pool of “takers,” with less and less “providers” being born.