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A NEW LOOK AT MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

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A Research Paper

Submitted to

Dr. Professor

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By

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A NEW LOOK AT MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

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Introduction

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Historically, marriage has been honored and supported by society. Often when a young man married he received a raise in pay so that he could support a wife and family. Moses writes, "If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married" (Deut. 24:5 NIV). In recent years, persistent challenges to everything traditionally masculine and feminine have left men and women unsure of their roles in society. As a result, many women are in a state of depression and self-doubt, while an increasing number of men are filled with confusion, unsure of what is expected of them.¹

[Click on References | Footnotes](#)

Perceptions and identities are deliberately being changed by Hollywood, advertisers and the media. It is imperative that believers recognize the importance of the differences between males and females, and of returning to the biblical concepts of masculinity and femininity².

Traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity have been battered and ridiculed for more than 20 years, creating confusion for both men and women.³ These revisions of age-old behavior patterns have produced awkwardness in the relationships between the sexes. Should a man stand when a woman enters the room? Will he please her by opening the door for her? Should he give her his seat on a crowded bus or

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¹John Gray, *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 5.

² Ibid.

³James Dobson, *Straight Talk*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family, 1991), 15.

subway? Have all the rules changed? Is there anything predictable and certain in the new order?

While these questions of social etiquette may seem superficial at first, they are hardly trivial. They reflect much deeper attitudes that have far-reaching implications. People are, after all, sexual beings. “Everything we do is influenced by your gender assignment.”⁴ The first element of self-identity as toddlers comes from their identification as boys and girls. Any confusion at that point—or in the relationship between the sexes—must be seen as threatening to the stability of society, itself.

The Role of Women *First Level bold, italicized centered*

Since the beginning of human existence, women in most cultures have identified themselves with child-rearing responsibilities. It was an honorable occupation that required no apology.⁵

Attack on Femininity *Second Level normal centered*

How has it happened, then, that homemaking has fallen on such lean times in the Western world? Why do women who remain at home in the company of little children feel such disrespect from the society in which they live? A partial answer can be found in the incessant bombardment by the media on all traditional Judeo-Christian values. “Radio, television, the press and the entertainment industry have literally (and deliberately) changed the way America thinks.”⁶

⁴Ibid. *Ibid. indicates on the same page and required a period.*

⁵Maggie Gallagher, “What Marriage Is For,” *The Weekly Standard* 8, no. 45 (4-11 August 2003): 22. Database. Available from ProQuest: <http://proquest.umi.com>. Accessed October 25, 2012.

⁶ Ibid.

Dr. James Dobson writes:

Many years have passed since Barbara Walters and Tom Snyder hosted a three-hour television special on the subject of women. I refer to it now because the program was so typical of the fare served up to the public in that day. The broadcast was aired on NBC in prime time and captured the attention of the country for one full evening. (What fantastic power for social change has been wrought by the tube!) I watched Walters and Snyder carefully on that occasion and, in fact, taped the program for future reference. Their stated purpose was to evaluate the world on women at that time, examining the many activities and involvement of the feminine gender. What resulted, however, was a powerful propaganda piece for what was then the new way of thinking. Women were depicted in numerous work situations, from business ownership to blue collar jobs. Not once in the three-hour program, however, was the role of the homemaker mentioned, except to refer indirectly to this outmoded responsibility in vaguely derogatory terms. Perhaps 14 million homemakers lived and breathed in this country, at that time, yet they were not referenced once in a program dedicated to the world of women. I'm sure the viewers got the message.⁷

Role of Mother and Homemaker Undermined

Dr. Dobson goes on to write that the effort to reorder the role of women proceeded on a broad scale, touching every dimension of society. For example, he received a letter about that time from a mother who was curious to learn why her local library had removed hundreds of books from its shelves. Upon investigation, she was shocked to discover that each volume depicting males and females in a traditional context was eliminated. If a woman was shown cooking dinner and a father was working in a factory, the book had to go. Obviously, no stone was left unturned in the campaign to revolutionize our ideas, though none dared call it censorship.⁸

⁷Ibid., 37.

⁸Ibid.

Feminist Legacy

This campaign to revolutionize our thinking has lost most of its fire today and the world has moved on. But make no mistake. The case against traditional womanhood has been heard, and it will never be the same. The female students at Wellesley College may not be familiar with the history described above, since some of them were not yet born when the movement began. Nevertheless, they are recipients of its legacy. When they voted not to invite first lady Barbara Bush to speak at their Commencement in 1990 because she hadn't done anything but raise a family and support her husband, they demonstrated how effectively feminist ideology has been ingrained in the attitudes of the young—especially those under the influence of liberal professors on university campuses.⁹

The Role of Men

Not only has there been a revolution in female sex role identity, but “maleness has been turned upside down, too.”¹⁰ Apart from the elements of social etiquette mentioned earlier, much deeper questions have been raised. What does it really mean to be a man today?

Attack on Masculinity

It is unacceptable to be “macho,” whatever that is, but men are not sure how they are expected to perform. Consider how a young husband might look upon his new role at the beginning of married life. Is he supposed to earn a living for his wife? Well, probably not. She may bring in more money than he. Is he expected to provide benevolent

⁹Gray, *Men Are from Mars*, 52.

¹⁰William Beausay II, *Boys! Shaping Ordinary Boys into Extraordinary Men* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 20.

leadership for his family in the major decisions? Even raising that issue in some circles is a sure way to start an argument. Is he supposed to be stoic and strong, or tender, sensitive and emotional? Alas, is there *anything* that distinguishes his role from his wife's, and where can he go to find out what is expected of him?

Role of Provider and Protector Undermined

“Historically, married men were not so uncertain; they understood intuitively that two family responsibilities exceeded all others in significance. They were expected to *protect* and *provide* for their wives and children.”¹¹ You can be sure they felt strongly about that obligation. If you insulted a woman in the 19th century or before, you would have dealt shortly with her angry husband. He would not have hesitated to lay down his life for her, if necessary. He was the defender of her honor, and she felt secure in his care. He took great satisfaction in what he contributed, materially and otherwise, to the welfare of his family. It was this masculine identity that linked him to his wife and children and gave him a sense of pride and accomplishment in his manhood.

The Threat to the Institution of the Family

“One of the greatest threats to the institution of the family today is the undermining of this role as protector and provider. This is the contribution for which men were designed, physically and emotionally. If it is taken away, their commitment to their wives and children is jeopardized.”¹² Malachi, chapter two, records that God hates divorce because it hurts the children so deeply. Dr. Dobson writes:

¹¹Richard Jackson, "Running Down the Up-Escalator: Gender Inequality," *Australian Geographer* 14 (May 1979): 180.

¹²Gary Smalley and John Trent, *The Hidden Value of a Man* (Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family, 1992), 36.

Let me personalize the concept. Within a lifetime of responsibilities and professional assignments, I have drawn the greatest satisfaction from the fact that I have cared for each member of my family for more than 30 years. I have watched over them in times of danger, and I have dedicated myself to their welfare. My identity is inextricably linked with that family commitment. If my role as protector and provider had been taken from me, much of the joy in family life would have gone with it. Men who serve as protectors and providers feel more masculine than those who do not.¹³

Past Wisdom

Past generations would hold us in utter disdain for our failure to preserve and propagate the wisdom of the ages. Consider the issue of women in the military, for example. There is a *reason* why men have fought the wars to this point. It has to do with children and society's acknowledgment of their dependence on their mothers. The image of babies being handed to stay-at-home fathers so Mom could be deployed overseas should be shocking to all of us. Specifically, there is no more dramatic evidence of the crisis in masculinity today than the fact that men would tolerate even the possibility that their wives, sisters, and daughters would do their fighting for them. Isn't that like a man staying in bed with the covers over his head while his wife goes to confront an intruder? Is there no dignity left in modern manhood?

Present Insanity

Sociologist George Gilder said it best in his excellent book, *Sexual Suicide*. He makes it clear that single men (as a class) are often a threat to society. Until they accept the responsibility for families, their sexual aggression is largely unbridled and potentially destructive. He writes:

Men commit over 90 percent of major crimes of violence, 100 percent of the rapes, 95 percent of the burglaries. They comprise 94 percent of our drunken drivers, 70 percent of suicides, 91 percent of offenders against family and

¹³Dobson, *Straight Talk*, 54.

children. Single men comprise between 80 and 90 percent of most of the categories of social pathology, and on the average they make less money than any other group in the society—yes, less than single women or working women. As any insurance actuary will tell you, single men are also less responsible about their bills, their driving, and other personal conduct. Together with the disintegration of the family, they constitute our leading social problem.¹⁴

Gilder goes on to say that women, by contrast, are naturally more motivated to achieve long-term stability. Their maternal inclinations (they do exist and are evident in every culture throughout the world) influence them to desire stable homes and a steady source of income. They want security for themselves and their children.¹⁵

The Divine Plan

Suddenly, we see the beauty of the divine plan. When a man falls in love with a woman, dedicating himself to care for her and protect her and support her, he suddenly becomes the mainstay of social order. Instead of using his energies to pursue his own lusts and desires, he wants to build a home and save for the future and seek the best job available. His selfish impulses are inhibited. His sexual passions are channeled. He discovers a sense of pride—yes, masculine pride—because he is needed by his wife and children. Everyone benefits from the relationship. Paul writes, “Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife, see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:33 KJV).

Conclusion

When a society is composed of millions of individual families that are established on this plan, then the nation is strong and stable. It is the great contribution marriage makes to a civilization. But in its absence, ruination is inevitable. “When men have no

¹⁴George Gilder, *Men and Marriage* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1995), 39.

¹⁵Ibid.

reason to harness their energies in support of the home, then drug abuse, alcoholism, sexual intrigue, job instability, and aggressive behavior can be expected to run unchecked throughout the culture. That is precisely what has happened to many inner-city families.”¹⁶ The government pays the bills. Who needs the man? He procreates and disappears. His masculinity has been assaulted, and he takes out his hostilities on the culture that rejected him. It all begins with an unhealthy relationship between the sexes that undermines families and leaves broken lives in its wake.¹⁷

“We must not abandon the biblical concept of masculinity and femininity at this delicate stage of our national history.”¹⁸ “Not that every woman must become a mother, mind you, or even a homemaker. But those who do must be honored and respected and supported.”¹⁹ There should be a clear delineation between maleness and femaleness, exemplified by clothing, customs and function. Men should be encouraged to provide for and protect their families, even laying down their lives for them if necessary. Children must be valued as our most priceless possession. Their relationship with their mothers is the most important association in their lives, and it must be given the highest social priority. Boys and girls should be taught that the sexes are equal in worth but very different from one another. Girls should know they are girls, and boys should know they are boys. Peter writes that husbands need to be considerate as they live with their wives,

¹⁶Ibid., 75.

¹⁷John G. Smith, “Evolution and Gender,” *Institute for Creation Research* (El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research). Internet. Available: <http://www.icr.org/>. Accessed October 25, 2012.

¹⁸Walter McKenzie, “M.I. Overview,” *Surfaquarium.org*, 2003. Internet. Available: http://www.surfaquarium.com/mi_overview.htm. Accessed October 25, 2012.

¹⁹Steven Tracy, “Headship with a Heart: How Biblical Patriarchy Actually Prevents Abuse,” *Christianity Today* 47, no. 2 (February 2002): 52. Database. Available from EBSCOhost, Academic Search Premier: <http://weblinks1.epnet.com>. Accessed October 25, 2012.

and treat them with respect so that God will listen to them (1 Pet. 3:7). And for the rest of us, self-awareness begins with an understanding of our sexual identity²⁰. It must not be blurred by those with an avant-garde agenda of their own. Men, it is time that we act like men.

Your paper should have 5 to 10 references. On the next page all the possible different types of references are given as samples.

²⁰Dolores Curran, "The Good Old Days Are Now: What Today's Families Are Doing Right," *U.S. Catholic* 67, no. 7 (July 2002): 19-22. Database. Available from ProQuest Religion: <http://proquest.umi.com>. Accessed October 25, 2012.

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