

Session 6: Advocates Who Undermine Outline

I. History of Feminism

First Wave:

Second Wave:

Third Wave:

Fourth Wave:

II. Core Thinking of Feminism

1. Sameness must replace stereotypes.
2. Independence must replace dependence.
3. Sexual liberation must replace sexual restraint.
4. A career must replace the family as a woman's primary pursuit in life.

III. An Alternative Paradigm to Feminism

Design

Interdependence

Other-oriented

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you hear anything today about Feminism that was “new” or surprised you?
2. What aspects of Feminism are appealing to you? Why? What “wrongs” has it attempted to address and how has it been effective?
3. Of the 4 core tenets of Feminism discussed, which have had the most impact on you? How?
4. What areas of Feminism do you want to “rethink?” Why?

Reflection Assignment:

How has the Feminist perspective directly affected choices you have made in the past?

(Example: “Although I am skilled at teaching, in college I majored in business so I could be more financially independent.”)

Passage to Ponder this week: James 1:5

Week Six Summary...

Historically, Feminism has contributed to the welfare of women in a variety of areas and certainly presents itself as being the advocate for women, on the side of right, on the side of fairness. How can anyone question that?

However, **questioning** things brings fuller understanding. What if this advocate for women undermines women in various ways? What if some of its core thinking actually degrades our value as women? Careful evaluation of these tenets might lead us to discover some implications that are not appealing and helpful at all. For example:

- **Sameness must replace stereotypes.** This voice tells us to be equal we must be the same, implying that traditionally “feminine” roles are inferior to men and indicating that all gender differences and concepts are social constructs to be overcome.
- **Independence must replace dependence.** This premise suggests that women need to be fully emancipated from men, who have historically been the problem, implying that dependence is our only other option and setting up adversarial male/female relationships.
- **Sexual liberation must replace sexual restraint as a personal value.** Attempting to address the “inequity” of sexual freedom, men having less risk and social consequences than women, this voice tells us that women should have the freedom to act as sexually unrestrained as men without consequence, leading us to give up calling men to a “higher standard” and lower ourselves to “equal” standards that actually devalue us.
- **Careerism must replace a family as a woman’s primary pursuit in life.** This tenet suggests that careers give women worth, providing power and independence, and women choosing to stay home and raise children are viewed as deceived and oppressed.

Certainly some who identify as feminists might disagree with some or all of these points and would discuss the issues in a more nuanced way than this summary; yet, these ideas are actually core to the Feminist movement and permeate much of our thinking as a culture, sometimes knowingly and sometimes unwittingly. The question is how have these shaped us and which do we want to reshape in our thinking?

Different from both “traditional” womanhood and core Feminism, the Bible offers an alternative. Rather than society constructing our essence/wiring, the **Bible** explains that God designed us, giving us meaning and purpose. We have a third option to independence or dependence—interdependence. Jesus presents an alternative paradigm to living, one that is other-oriented. His design offers a radically different approach that brings good to all humanity, male and female.