

# Feminism

*The Handmaid's Tale*

## 1. Three waves

1 <sup>st</sup> Wave (up to 1950s)	Women should be treated like men	Men and women are equal!
2 <sup>nd</sup> Wave (1960s to 1990s)	Women should overthrow male oppression	Men and women are enemies!
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wave (2000 to present)	Gender differences are socially constructed weapons of power	Men and women is a fiction!

## 2. The Enlightenment, part 2

Immanuel Kant:

‘... man’s leaving paradise, represented to him by reason as the first abode of his species, was nothing but the transition from the rudeness of a merely animal creature to humanity, from the go-cart of instinct to the guidance of reason, in a word, From the guardianship of nature to the state of liberty. Whether man has won or lost by this alteration, cannot be any longer the question, when one considers the destination of his species, that consists in nothing but the advancing towards perfection, however imperfectly might fall out the first endeavours to reach this aim, even following one another in a long series of their members.’ *The conjectural beginning of the history of mankind, 1786*

The Enlightenment is **the rebranding of sin**.

Kant: we construct reality through the rational hardware of our minds

Rousseau: We’re all Equal!

Marx: We’re overthrowing oppressors to progress towards equality!

*Postmodern turn: we construct reality through the **software** of our minds. It’s Kant 2.0.*

Foucault: Social differences are constructed as weapons of power!

Feminism: Enlightenment, part 2.

Enlightenment: Men are free! They submit to nobody (especially God)! (but women still submit to men)

Feminism: Women are free! They submit to nobody (especially men, but God too)!

→ Each is reacting to and critiquing genuine evils in the previous stage.

*Yet see Christianity, not the Enlightenment, as the cause. The devotion to the Enlightenment principle is unchanged.*

### 3. A better approach to being human

#### a) Male, female and creation

Genesis 1:27            The image of God, male and female

- Sex is part of who we are
- Both men and women are images of God; and human society as a combination of the two images God ('man' is representative of both)
- Male and female deeply linked to reproduction and rule
- Designed for marriage: Fruitful Union

Genesis 2:18-25        One Flesh union the goal of God's image

Husband/Father and Wife/Mother

Why is the *image* of God designed as profoundly different sexes, woman made from man, with the goal of permanent, fruitful union?

Ephesians 5:31-32    Christ and the Church

In this marriage God is truly imaged. Gen 1:26-28 fulfilled. The wedding day: Revelation 21-22. Song of Songs.

Remember that the church is humanity remade; the beginning of the new creation. Therefore the male-female duality is reflective of the distinction between God and his image, mankind.

God's masculinity is essential for us to understand how we relate to him.

Genesis 1:27: how is God referred to?

1 Corinthians 11:7: The glory of God, the glory of man.

Woman images how all of mankind relates to God.

Man images how God relates to all mankind.

#### b) Male, female and sin

Genesis 3: the devil aims at subverting male and female

The corruption of maleness and femaleness

The pattern of grasping at freedom leading to slavery and misery

The effect of the enlightenment, and feminism, on men and women

### c) Male, female and the gospel

The gospel is all about how male and female relate rightly

The beauty of submission, the glory of sacrifice

The honouring of singleness

Worship: all about gender

Flourishing of men and women

<b>God</b>	<b>Mankind</b>
<b>Christ</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Worker	Helper
Sacrifice	Submit
Father(protects and provides)	Mother (nurtures and cares)
Forms	Fills
Image and glory of God	Glory of man

## 4. Some implications

- We are not arguing for a return to the 1950s, 1930s, 1830s, 1330s...
- Feminist critiques often right
- But hardly ever critiquing Christianity but the previous iteration of the enlightenment e.g. (Handmaid's Tale)
- Submission is the glory of humanity (Ruth 3)
- Marriage is the norm; family, not our own sex, is our closest loyalty (with the church family coming first, of course)
  - Marry if you can
  - If you can't or choose not to, it is a godly sacrifice
- The Church is the great marriage on display
  - Hence the importance of not subverting male and female in the Church
- Christian homes are the second-best advert for the gospel
- This is not a problem but a glorious evangelistic opportunity.