

FEMINISM LOSES ITS FEMININITY

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What does Abraham's wife, Sarah, have to do with Feminists? What happens when Deborah (from the book of Judges) meets Lara Croft (the main character from the movie *Tomb Raider*)?¹ Too often forgotten, faithful women from the Bible like Sarah and Deborah should help mold what it means to be feminine and also what it does *not* mean to be feminine.

Think first of Sarah. The apostle Peter writes: "*Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered*" (1 Peter 3:6-7). In this passage, one finds a wonderful picture of wifely femininity. Sarah pleases God by obeying her husband – even calling him "lord"! From this example, Peter encourages husbands to cherish their wives. It should be of great interest to the modern world that this model of femininity is linked with faithful, strong, and loving masculinity. In addition, that the biblical model of masculinity and femininity (as typified in this passage) results in spiritual health, this also should be paid its due attention given the all-too-frequent spiritual rifts between masculinity and femininity.

Oh the contrary picture that Feminists have! Instead of masculinity and femininity working together in such a biblically beautiful fashion, Feminists have tried to redefine femininity apart from (and often against) strong masculinity. Some Feminists might wear nail polish and perfume, while others might refuse to do anything that society traditionally considers feminine; but in either case, Feminists always grind their ideological ax against thoughts of submission to husbands and thoughts of being a weaker vessel.² Since such is true, Feminists actually deny the biblical view of femininity, which is linked with being a "weaker vessel."

Think now of Deborah. Initially, it might appear that Deborah is the patron saint of Feminists. After all, when the weak-willed and timid men of Israel would not go out and fight Sisera, Deborah stepped into the situation and acted more like Lara Croft than Martha Stewart. However, one misses the point of Deborah's apparent strength if her own words are not considered: "*I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman*" (Judges 4:9). Unmistakably, Deborah knows her place as a weak vessel and also knows that her situation is symbolic of God's judgment upon the men of Israel that have forsaken their masculine duty. Therefore, Deborah's humble comments and femininity dovetail nicely with 1 Peter 3:6-7.

The point of the passages in 1 Peter and Judges is not that women are physically inferior or that they lack strength. To the contrary, women possess considerable strength -- as any husband will testify after witnessing his wife give birth. The point is that women possessing true femininity understand that being a weaker vessel means being submissive and obedient to their husbands' strong leadership. Acknowledging biblical masculinity and femininity in action proves to be difficult for both men and women. Nonetheless, the Creator's intent is clear, as is the creation's responsibility.

1 See Martha Irvine's AP article "New Breed of Female Icons are Tough" in the Washington Post, 8 May 2001. Available at www.washingtonpost.com.

2 See Kathryn Jean Lopez's "Feminists in Short Skirts" in *American Outlook*, March/April 2001, 60-62.

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