Learning the Feminine Arts?

Pamela Marais 18 July 2017



As part of my initial preparation for this blog, I Googled the word ‘femininity’. It was immediately obvious that there are gigantic variances in the understanding of this word.

Here are two that I think will make you smile:

The Art of Being Feminine: How to make a man fall in love with you. Become a feminine, womanly, mysterious and ideal woman. Learn the feminine arts. Be more beautiful, attractive, seductive, charming and successful. Attract high status men and alpha guys.

Discover philosophies and methods of the East, such as “giving way to get your way.” Learn how to mix and adapt the rituals and the traditions of the geisha, and apply them to a modern relationship.

Let me put your mind at rest straight away and assure you that this is not a blog on ‘discovering the ancient, oriental secrets of femininity and allure’!

Because we are believers, we need to turn to the Word of God, our manual for life, with confidence and trust for our understanding of ‘femininity’ and not give in to the temptation to succumb to the allure of ‘worldly wisdom’.

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So what does the Word of God tell us concerning our womanhood or femininity? What is God's pattern for women?

The New Testament opens with the unfolding of the Gospel story and the record of a remarkable woman who epitomizes true femininity: Mary. She is visited by an angel and given the stunning news that she will give birth to the Son of God. Her answer, recorded in Luke 1:38, is truly amazing, 'I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said'. Before we go any further, think for a moment how that acceptance of God's will was going to impact Mary's life. Yes, there was the enormous privilege, but there was also the reality of the cost (disgrace, possible rejection by Joseph, a total interruption of her plans – and, of course, the pain that was going to come later). Unlike Eve, Mary's answer reveals a heart fully yielded to the will of God – a heart of faith in the character of God, His goodness and His sovereignty. This yielding to, humble dependence on and faith in God (even when His instructions or promises sound irrational) is the heartbeat of true femininity, and this applies to all of us, married or unmarried.

The essence of femininity is **surrender**: yielding to God first and then, flowing out of that, to our husbands and church leaders. This is not possible outside of a change of heart.

On 1 July, I will have been married for 39 years and have periodically really struggled with 'true femininity'. I have discovered, to my dismay, that you do not win this battle once and for all, but that because of our inherited sinful nature (I am going to have a few words with Eve when I get to heaven), we will regularly be tempted to succumb to worldly wisdom and live for ourselves.

I have at times been deceived into believing that, despite the fact that I was not yielding to my husband, I was yielded to God.

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A few years ago, without me noticing, I began to drift away from Biblical femininity. William (my husband) was travelling quite a bit and for various reasons I was not with him, and so began to really enjoy my independence. I was as happy as a little lark, doing my own thing more and more. Then suddenly, or so it seemed to me, 'the wheels came off' and William and I had a major 'blow up'! After the dust had settled and I had dried my tears of self-pity and spent time on my knees in God's presence, I realised that I had drifted away from God's pattern. I had slipped into the driving seat and was becoming increasingly independent. God took the blindfold off my eyes and showed me my selfishness. I was so busy concentrating on the speck in my husband's eye that I failed to see the log in my own. I had to go before God and repent of my independence and make some changes. I had to once again surrender my own plans and yield to the purposes

to which God had called my husband. God graciously forgave me, gave me the desire to change, and then enabled me to implement the changes. There was an immediate positive change in my relationship with my husband, and although we are not guaranteed that our husbands will respond positively to our efforts, they often do. However, we can be sure that our Father in heaven watches every act of surrender and receives it as if we had yielded to Jesus (in fact, every act of yielding to our husbands starts with yielding to the Lord).

For those who are not married, do you have problems yielding to the leaders God has appointed in the church? Are you living according to your own agenda or have you submitted your plans and hopes and dreams to our Father in heaven, trusting Him that His will for your life is perfect?

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You will never be truly feminine outside of a real and transforming relationship with Jesus Christ. Leon Bloy wrote these words: ‘The holier a woman is, the more she is a woman’.