

WHAT WOMEN WANT

By
Dr. Vic Reasoner

It was a man's world, when I was a kid. Men went first in line and women served them. Some men abused their power and eventually the feminist movement exploded in reaction. I would not condone the abuse and mistreatment of women which has occurred. Hollywood entertained men by reducing women to nothing more than sex objects and women ultimately revolted.

Now Hollywood is producing movies like What Women Want in order to teach a generation of cavemen the new rules. Today's world is a woman's world and in order for men to succeed they must learn to think like a woman thinks. According to the new rules, right is what women want. Women must be accepted as they are.

In the movie Mel Gibson discovers that he can hear what women are thinking as a result of an accident. Eventually he loses this "gift," but not before he learns what women want. Thus, with no outside help except for an electrical short in his hair dryer, Mel transforms himself from a chauvinist to a sensitive male.

Early in the movie the proposition is stated that in order to understand a man you have to know his mother. Mel's mother was a Los Vegas show girl and so Mel grew up relating to women as sex objects. While every man's mother was not a stripper, the point is that men adopt the values of their culture. Women, in general, were exploited as sex objects during the last half of the twentieth century, so this is the view men have of women.

This, of course, is an over-generalization which implicates all men as beasts. The movie also perpetuates the old stereotype that men don't listen and are basically clods. These assumptions are the basis of every sit-com on TV. Men are constantly bombarded with this same message -- they are incompetent.

Their only salvation, then, is to give women what they want. If a man leers after a woman, he is a beast. But when Mel hears what women think, they often were thinking vulgar thoughts about men. The only difference is that women have to be themselves and accepted for who they are.

If a man fornicates with a woman, he is a beast. But if a woman invites a man to fornicate with her, he should give the woman what she wants. Gay men make the best lovers because they are in touch with their feminine side.

When Mel's daughter treats him with disrespect, he has no choice but to take it because women are supposed to be free to say whatever they want to say. When he walks in on his fourteen-year old daughter fornicating on his sofa with her boyfriend, he is the clod. But when she wants the most expensive prom dress and all the accessories, the "old man" gives her what she wants. When she gets to the prom and decides against submitting to rape, he comes to her rescue. But the morality of the teenager is her choice; it is Dad's job to accommodate her choices.

If a man and a woman are both competing for the same job promotion and the man beats the woman out of the position, it is because he is a boorish beast. However, as the movie ends Helen Hunt loses her job to Mel. Mel then shows that he has reformed by giving her his promotion and she in turn fires him. However, she is not portrayed as insensitive for firing him because whatever a woman does is

right.

So Hollywood is still teaching situational ethics, its just that the roles have been reversed. The movie emphasizes several themes, which are true but only state half of the reality. Such themes as -- It's not easy to be a woman. Women wish their husbands understood them. Women worry all the time -- reflects the struggles of both men and women.

We really are no further up the road toward better relationships with carnal women in charge than we were when carnal men were in the driver's seat. Jesus taught that our first priority was to give God what he wants. God requires both men and women to repent of their sins against each other. Then the Holy Spirit will begin the process of transformation. That process includes a death to our self-centeredness.

In other words giving sinful women what they want will no more produce a utopian society than giving sinful men what they want produced happiness on earth. The tension between men and women in our society will be solved only when both men and women surrender their rights, die to their agendas, and seek to live by God's precepts.

Jesus taught that unless a person hates his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters -- yes, even his own life -- he cannot be a disciple of Christ. Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Christ cannot be his disciple (Luke 14:26-27). By definition, our "cross" is to die to what we want in order to fulfill what Christ wants. Christ demands first place.

It is nice if I can please myself while I am obeying Christ, but when I come to a fork in the road I must go down the road he leads whether or not it is what I would choose. If I can obey Christ while giving women what they want, that is well and good. But if my obedience to Christ causes me to displease another woman or man, that is the cross I must bear. Jesus warned that he did not come to bring peace, but a sword. A total commitment to Christ will produce a strain between a man and his father, a daughter and her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and by implication -- all other human relationships. "A man's enemies will be the members of his own household" (Matt 10:36). Jesus again requires us to love him above all other loves and to relinquish control of our life for his sake (v 37).

Men who use women to get what they want, will never get what they are really seeking. And men who give women what they want, in order to get in return what they want, will ultimately never find fulfillment either. Thus, the new role reversal advocated by What Women Want will satisfy neither men nor women in the long run.

The relational struggle between men and women is a result of the curse of sin. We have not advanced from the dynamics first described in Genesis 3:16. A woman will desire to be the master; her husband will tend to be overbearing in his rule over her. The only answer is for both men and women to submit to what God wants.