



REAL WOMEN!

Maturation: It's a Process

R. E. A. L.
Women!
R. elevant
E. ncouraging
A. live
L. ionhearted

Inside this issue:

Maturation cont	2
Rules VS Tools	3
Who own your child's heart	4

Impart Ministries
Darryl & Martha
Rodman
PO Box 751
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
360-679-9353
Email:
martha@impart.org
Web site:
www.impart.org

⁴ *Then we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth. Ephesians 4:14*

God is looking for men and women who decide they want to grow up into His fullness, people who will allow His Spirit to mature them in every area of their life. This is not easy. As we look to His Word we find the New Testament letters filled with encouragement for God's people to grow up. As we look at ourselves and our churches, we realize that more growth is needed. It is great to have babies—but healthy babies are expected to grow. It is great to be a little child, but even most little children are looking to the day “when I grow up I want to be...” But what about you and I? Are we continuing to grow or are we stunted in some areas? Scripture refers to maturity in terms of perfection. *Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Ephesians 4:13*

This scares many of us—we can't see our selves as perfect, but that is because we are thinking what that word means in English. No flaws, being entirely without fault or defect that certainly is not me. However, the Greek the word perfect is more closely aligned to the word

“mature”. This word denotes a person or thing which has completed its natural growth or development. It describes a person or thing which has attained a final or desired state and which demonstrates the characteristics of that full development. It also contains the thoughts of someone who is experienced in the things of life.

So how can we discover our real “spiritual age”? By examining the Scriptures we find accurate measuring rods. It is important that we gauge our spiritual growth by His standards, not our own. We can fool ourselves into thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought (therefore, more mature than we are). It is important to know where we find ourselves, currently, because then we can set ourselves to grow. Please understand that this is a process. We need diligence, determination and the understanding that we also have the grace of God to learn the lessons we need to learn so we can grow. *And the Child [Jesus] grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Luke 2:40* The grace of God will be upon us as well. Please do not let discouragement or pride stand in your way.

We also have the Holy Spirit. It takes courage, but you can ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you really are in your development. When Darryl got saved he was 23 years old, but God showed him that emotionally he was only 14. That was quite a revelation. As a result, he

asked the Lord to help him grow and mature, which He did. The Holy Spirit has showed me similar things (not a specific age, but definitely areas where I have been stunted). He is so gracious to bring about circumstances that have helped me mature in areas where I was quite content to stay small and bear minimum fruit. Not His plan!

Paul wrote *dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to mature Christians. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. I had to feed you with milk and not with solid food, because you couldn't handle anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your own sinful desires. 1 Corinthians 3:1*

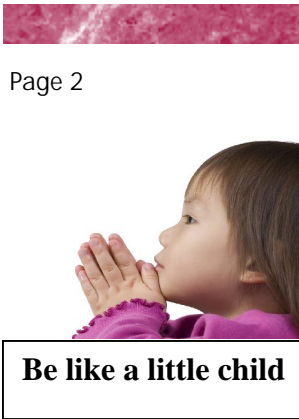
Here are some areas in which we can assess our maturity level.

⇒ Use of Language

Mature Christians govern their speech. It does not matter to whom they are talking (spouse, children, co-worker, believer or unbeliever). They apologize when they misuse their tongue.

1. Speak the Truth:

“If you want a happy life and good days, keep your tongue



Be like a little child

(Continued from page 1)
 from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies.

2. Speak the truth in love. They are not afraid to address difficult situations, but do so with grace and love. *But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, Ephesians 4:15*

3. Speak words which build up. *Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. Ephesians 4:29*

Immature believers:

Use “baby talk” and they speak whatever comes to their mind no matter the effect on the hearer.

Their speech is full of baby talk such as: “I don’t want to”, “I can’t”, “it’s mine”, “I don’t know how”, “It’s too hard”, “what is in it for me?”

They fall into Gossip

They make excuses for the use of profane language.

⇒ Thought Life

Mature Christians think differently than immature Christians. They view life from an eternal perspective. They focus on others more than themselves. They think about how they can build the Kingdom of God.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. I Corinthians 13:11

Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you. Romans 12:3

Immature Christians think about the things of this world, themselves and their happiness.

You must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Ephesians 4:17-18

⇒ Actions

Mature Christians act differently;

they take responsibility for their actions. They reproduce, and lead the young ones; helping them to grow. Mature Christians do not faint in the time of hardness and suffering nor do they grow weary of well doing. They persevere and enjoy the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ as they endure hardness as a soldier.

Immature Christians go AWOL (absent without leave). They get tired and quit. They are susceptible to deception and seduction of the enemy to desert their post. They are drawn away by their own lusts.

Dear ones, these are three areas where we can evaluate our maturity level. Once we are aware of areas where we need to grow, let us set ourselves to repent if necessary and then set ourselves to grow in grace as well as knowledge. Our faithful God hungers for growing, maturing daughters.

Written by:

Martha Rodman

Statement of Faith:

We are becoming Relevant, Encouragers who are Alive to God and His Spirit, even to the point of Being Lion-Hearted!



Check out Impart Ministries Web site.

You can now download teaching and preaching messages at

www.impart.org

All the back issues of Real Women are available as well. You can print specific articles to share as well.



Summer Fun!

**There are four Cardinals.
 3 Males
 1 Female**



Leadership Encouragement

Rules Vs Tools

This summer we had the joy of stopping by our dear friends home, Jim and Jean Stephens. They have been married 45 years, and have almost the same number of years in ministry service to the Kingdom. They are well established and experienced in the things of God. So when Jim shared a book with us called "Contrarian's guide to knowing God"*, I took it with interest. He said it would probably be a book which stimulated our thinking, gave some answers to some questions; raise others as well as perhaps even make us mad!

Larry Osborne is the author. He has been the senior pastor of North Coast church in Vista, CA since 1980. North Coast is considered one of the 10 most influential churches in the United States. I write the above intro simply to let you know that these are well balanced real people who love Jesus.

First of all the definition of contrarian thinking at its best simply asks, *is this true?*

My goal in focusing on some of my thoughts from this book is to help you as a leader to ask yourself the same thing "*is this true?*". You may be simply passing on thoughts that may be good, but are they God? One of the chapters Pastor Osborne includes is entitled "Tools or Rules?" In this chapter he explores the fact we need to distinguish in our hearts and minds God given rules which are established in His word for every believer. There are no exceptions to these rules. Thou shall not steal is great example of a rule. It should be kept by one and all.

Tools, however, are different. They are gifts given that help us develop our personal relationship with the Lord. The right tool at the right time is invaluable. If we see the "spiritual disciplines" of worship, prayer, giving, meditating, journaling, fellowshiping with others as tools, rather than rules, each of these disciplines will become life giving rather than life sucking. Teaching

and presenting these spiritual disciplines as tools to our followers will help them grow in their faith and in their relationship with Jesus.

Back in the late 60's and on into the 70's the Holy Spirit brought revelation of the blessing of true worship. Hymns gave way to scripture songs, quiet reverential standing gave way to hand clapping and the raising of hands. God restored the heart of worship to the church. It was an amazing time. This new style of worship began to divide the church into various camps. Moral judgments were given on both sides. What is God's rule? He is worthy to be worshipped. We must find the best way that we can to give Him the honor and glory that He deserves that comes from a heart of worship. It is not about the how, it is about the Who. However, many people made rules out of the new tool and it became a point of contention in many churches.

Another example of a tool turning into a rule is family devotions. The family hearth, family prayer, family devotions whatever you call it can be a wonderful tool for helping children grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. However, it can also be the means of turning children away from the very God parents are trying so hard for them to know. To be honest, we tried many different means and ways to include this into our family. Why? Because I heard on Focus on the Family radio and in various Christian parenting books that this was a non-negotiable. If we wanted to raise Godly men and women we must start with family devotions. What went wrong? The fact my husband had never heard of such a thing, for one thing! He had not read any books on the subject, neither had he had any direct revelation or conviction from the Lord about "doing" it. He just had my "encouragement". The kids for the most part hated it...it was an endurance contest for us all. So when we went back to simply talking to Jesus, with Jesus and about Jesus all day long—it worked! We influenced our kids with what was real in our hearts. We set an example by them seeing us spending time with the Lord in the Word and in prayer with them at the dining table and before they went to sleep. But in my heart I had to deal with the anxiety of the fact we broke the "rule" which in fact is

only a tool! The tool is to help our children come to know Him.

These same tools to rules concerns can be found in "how to study the Bible" guidelines, "how to pray guidelines" etc. We must be careful as leaders not to insist things become rules when the Bible only shares them as tools. There is no rule in the Word that it must be read through once a year, but we are given strong encouragement to meditate on it, to hide it in our hearts and to love it. I have read it through in a year several times, but then, personally, I got so caught up in making sure my boxes are checked it stopped being life giving. I came into a season where I needed to focus on smaller quantities to really take the time to think about what I was reading. Is it wrong to encourage a set systematic study of the Word? Of course not. But again, we must be careful we don't use our tools as rules and therefore add condemnation to others.

Bottom line. Share the tools that have brought life to you. But first make sure that the rules are taught as rules and the tools as tools. 2 Timothy 2:15-16 instructs us: *Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. Avoid godless, foolish discussions that lead to more and more ungodliness.*

This book does make you think, which is a good thing. You probably won't agree with everything, but, then again, that is ok!

*Osborne, Larry. *Contrarians' Guide to Knowing God*. Multnomah Books, 2007



Building Together Across Generations

Who Owns Your Child's Heart?

R.E.A.L.

Women

Encouraging

Enthusiastic

Enduring

Examples

Eager

In the September edition of Charisma magazine Ron Luce (president and founder of Teen Mania Ministries, a Christian organization reaching millions of young people) made a statement which caught my attention. He stated *“Though it may come as a surprise to some of us, our kids have gradually transferred ownership of their hearts from us, their parents to their friends or the culture. Kids care more about pleasing their peers than pleasing Mom and Dad. This type of thinking begins gradually, but every little step is a sign that their hearts are being lured away.”*

The phrase “transferred ownership” really hit my spirit hard. The article goes on to encourage parents to *“woo our kids so they will want to listen to us—not to the media, their peers or ungodly influences”*. It is of course easier to implement this while our children are still young, while they think Mom and Dad are the greatest. It is an opportune time to build a good foundation for a future relationship. Young children watch their parent's eyes and if they find them distracted, bored or disconnected from them, it conveys the message “I am not important, I am not valued”.

There is a strong need for each of us to find places of acceptance and connection. Not understanding that even young children have this need can cause parents to miss out on these vital areas. It is even more crucial to forge these connections as your children grow up. It takes time, it takes patience and it must be done intentionally. This is not accomplished by isolating your child from the culture, but by open communication about what is healthy and unhealthy about our culture.

Here are a few thoughts that I have observed from families whose children have not transferred ownership to others.

- These parents have a strong positive Christian identity.
- These parents model their love for Christ in the home as well as their community in a consistent manner.
- These parents make it a priority to talk with their children about all kinds of issues. When their child expresses an opinion they talk about the opinion without disrespecting the child. Meal time is planned as a together time.
- These parents cultivate a culture of respect for the child as a person created by God with gifts and talents which need to be developed.
- These parents work hard to instill godly character in their children by example, teaching as well as by discipline.
- These parents set a culture of fun and faith into their home, but without sarcasm and hurtful teasing.
- These parents are careful to help develop relationships with their child's friends.
- These parents pray for their children, expecting the Holy Spirit to work with the seeds they have planted in their child's heart.
- These parents know how to choose their battles and do not make every skirmish into a major war with their children.
- These parents are quick to ask forgiveness when they make a mistake with their children.
- The culture of the home is built on love as well as respect; grace as well as boundaries.
- These parents are real people, serving a real Jesus—growing and learning in their relationship with Him and His Church.
- These parents intentionally seek to make warm, lasting memories with their children through fun family traditions.

Sign up for

The Email Version of

Real Women!

Email your request:

Martha@impart.org

