

August R&R

*From Girl to Woman*

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Have you ever asked yourself when a girl becomes a woman? I know I have, as I look into the eyes of my seven, nine, and fifteen-year-old daughters. I realize they are not women, but when will they be? When will they make that transition to womanhood? Is there some type of nebulous something that is soon to happen and then I will know they are no longer my little girls, but grown women? We have all seen on movies or television some type of event that has caused a family or society to view someone no longer as a little girl, but instead as a grown woman, yet aren't those just fantasies? Let's see....

The first thing that most people think about when maturing into a woman is her ability to have children. But that happens as early as age 9! Surely we cannot use this standard, because a nine-year-old is still a child whether her body has matured to that point or not.

Well, what about at marriage? Isn't that what girls of all ages dream about and plan for so many years long before they meet their future prince? No, that won't work either. We can't use marriage, because as we all know couples who have gotten married and really had no inkling of what it meant to be an adult, much less to be married.

So let's dig a little deeper and ask a better question: What "qualifies" her to be a woman, to make that change from girlhood to womanhood? And for our standard of measure, let's use not the world's standard, which includes everything from age to academia, but instead let's look at the oldest standard, the Bible.

We read in Titus 2:4-5 that the older women are to "admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." There is really nowhere else in Scripture where a list like this is given. This is a list from which girls and young women of all ages are to be taught and trained. When we combine this

list with what is said in 1 Peter 3 where women are to have a meek and quiet spirit, along with the woman of Proverbs 31, we can get a good picture of qualities we are to nourish in our little girls on their way to womanhood.

A girl growing up in her parents' household, after the Biblical pattern, learns directly from her father and mother what it means to be a woman of God and a daughter of Zion. In addition, she learns about a Titus 2, 1 Peter 3, and Proverbs 31 woman indirectly by watching her mother interact with the family and the world.

Biblically, a girl becomes an adult when she is able to do all those things listed in these Scriptures while still under her parents' (specifically her father's) roof and authority. Yes, she can learn to "love her husband" by first showing love to her father.

I know, more responsibility for us dads! Our daughters will accept young men who love them like we love them, good or bad. We fathers are not perfect just as their husbands will not be perfect, but will both cherish and adore them.

Yes, she can also learn to love children by the families she is around while growing up. If she sees her mother, who, incidentally qualifies as an "older woman", loving, caring for and tending to a child's needs, then the daughter will see the pattern and example set. Sadly, however, many don't have a family, church, or societal culture where a love for and tending to children is nurtured and taught. This is seen in the fact that hospitals and the "state" do so much teaching on caring for infants/toddlers and in the fact that many children go to what their parents call "school" at age 6 weeks.

What about the others items listed in Titus 2? All these also can be accomplished while little girls, big girls, and teenage girls are growing up **at** home with a meek and quiet spirit. Granted the mother in the home is the one called "blessed" when she serves others and in particular her household (Proverbs 31), but all daughters are makers, keepers, and guards of their homes in training, and all the while should be longing for that "blessed" title.

So what qualifies a daughter to become a godly woman? The answer is gentle trustfulness where a daughter learns through observation and action how to be a Titus 2, 1 Peter 3, and Proverbs 31 woman. Then, when parents are approached by a young man asking for their daughter's hand in marriage, they can give her away knowing that their

daughter will be able to fulfill her role and responsibility as a wife, mother, and homemaker so “that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”