

# Road Blocks to Maturity

Martha's Women Retreat

March, 1988

## Introduction:

We are dealing with sin areas which hinder our growth, our ability to love, to relate to God and other people, which alienate us from our families, friends and even ourselves.

We've chosen areas which are especially relevant to us--the female sex. Sins like gossip, manipulation, expectations and judging others motives.

Though this sounds like a negative, depressing subject for a treat, notice I called them "road blocks" to maturity. It's my great burden for you that you choose to remove these roadblocks and to become godly, mature, loving wives, mothers and Christian workers in our fellowship.

To this end we have designed a retreat in which you will study and come up with the answers you need for your particular sin areas. This is not to categorize you, but to help you:

- 1) Think through why you are the way you are.
- 2) The wrong responses you have based on your background and personality.
- 3) Study mature Biblical response, how to grow past the negative and also how to discipline others in the same area of sin.

This could be a turning point in many of your lives--it could easily be the most hopeful and positive retreat and Bible study of your Christian life so far. It will depend on your attitude and your response.

If you have the attitude of openness, willingness to see and deal with your particular "road blocks", you will share openly, allow the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word and go home encouraged--on the way to the fulfilling life Christ promised. That's what I'm asking for and praying for.

Sanctification, which is maturity, is the single most needed element ~~with YCF lacks~~ both men and women. Since women are so significant, so strong and play such large roles in the lives of men and children in the Body, it is imperative that we become mature, loving, godly women without delay.

Truly, it would be hard to over-estimate the importance of women in God's scheme of things--and we know it! We know it and mis-use our power a great deal of the time to the detriment of the church, the men and our children. All you have to do is think how powerful your mother's influence was in your home and probably still is in your life. The Bible is full of exhortations for women and warnings about ungodly women--contentious women, tempting, seducing, controlling, destructive women. It's the Bible in Ez. 15:42 that says "like mother--like daughter"--that shows the tremendous "mothering" influence of our power.

God compares wandering, unfaithful Israel to a harlot--vivid descriptions of the way a woman seduces a man into sin. Also the apostate church is called the harlot--Babylon.

God also highly values women. He chose Mary to bear Jesus--God in the flesh. Godly women have always been in the forefront of God's kingdom. He does not give us a secondary role, but rather a primary, vital role at the hear of His work.

It has always been my contention (and my mother's before me) that a woman can make or break a man. With her deep, strong emotions she can love, honor, encourage, support, motivate her man or she can with that same strong emotional side she can cut him to pieces, or resist, withdraw, punish, control him emotionally until he "gives in" or turns into a "functioning robot." Women are the strongest emotionally.

The same is true of her children. She can raise them up to be mature, godly adults or she can emotionally harass them, manipulate them, tie them to her or drive the away, spoil and ruin them.

A mother has many times more the amount of input into her children that the father. How she nurtures (or refuses to) and trains and loves her children has lasting results and effects the next generation and the next.

A godly wife and mother is described in Prov 31 where it says "her children rise up and bless her and her husband praises her."

What an awesome responsibility! What a great privilege! What far-reaching power resides in each of us!

Shall we squander it uselessly and destructively on our own selfish wrong response? Will we choose to destroy men and other women and also our own selves with our tongues and emotional strength? Or shall we marshal our many talents and use our great emotional gifts with God's priorities:

- 1) Sacrificially love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.
- 2) And love one another--that's our strong emotional gift.
- 3) Serve --in the Body of Christ --both men and women tirelessly that's our strong physical bodies. (?)
- 4) Minister God's life to the Body of Christ and our families, by laying our lives down for them--that's our compassion and endurance and practical discernment.
- 5) Pray--women are the ones who pray in the Body of Christ--we are sensitive to the leading of the H.S. and faithful to pray continuously.

So this is what our retreat is all about Roadblocks to Maturity.

Tonight Susan Haines will deal with the Tongue--one of our most lethal weapons. Tomorrow morning I will deal with several more areas. Then Brunch. Then Lisa Reece will teach us how to communicate in a way that the other person understands--relationally. After which you will go to work and study together in small groups. More on that tomorrow.

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