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Nice Girls Don't Change the World

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a good woman

The opposite of a nice girl, I learned, is a "good woman." Being a good woman means trading the safe, passive, people-pleasing behavior of niceness for the dynamic power of true goodness. It means moving from the weakness and immaturity of girlhood toward the strength and maturity of womanhood.





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Whereas a girl of any age lives out the script she learned as a child—a script too often grounded in powerlessness—a woman acknowledges and accepts her power to change, and grow, and be a force for good in the world.

Whereas a nice girl tends to live according to the will of others, a good woman has only one goal: to discern and live out the will of God.

A good woman knows that her ultimate calling in life is to be part of God's plan for redeeming all things in this sin-touched world.

A good woman knows she cannot be all things to all people, and she may, in fact, displease those who think she should just be nice. She is not strident or petty or demanding, but she does live according to conviction. She

knows that the Jesus she follows was a revolutionary who never tried to keep everyone happy.

That picture of a good woman made me want to be one. It made me want to grow up and trade the innocuous acceptability of niceness for the world-changing power and passion of true goodness.

I was thirty-nine years old when I walked into my counselor's office and said, "I've been working so hard to keep everybody else happy, but I'm so miserable I want to die." I spent the decade of my forties digging out of that hole. Now, nearly midway through my fifties, I've discovered that growing up is an ongoing process—I have not yet arrived. Still, I have learned some things on the journey to becoming a good woman.