

The Imitation Trap

Boys are different from girls.

Don't worry; I've known this for a long time—at least in terms of physical differences. But never have I had the invisible differences between the genders demonstrated so clearly as this past weekend, when I took my son and two of his friends to Legoland for his birthday.

The three boys chose to sit in the back seat of our minivan so they could all be together. I, as the driver, was too far away to be part of the conversation. That was fine with me. I got a kick out of just listening to them.

Here are the things I learned from my eavesdropping:

1. Eleven-year-old boys are every bit as loud as 11-year-old girls.
2. The decibel level, however, won't consist primarily of whispering and giggles, but rather of random, questionable noises and frequent usages of the word "butt."
3. On the other hand, there will be plenty of giggles when someone says the aforementioned "butt" or refers to any other bodily function you wouldn't want to perform in polite company.

Boys and girls are *very* different.

This presents somewhat of a problem for Kenny. His siblings who are closest to him in age are all girls. And what Kenny thinks is hilarious, they often consider to be rude or gross. ("Mommy, make Kenny stop!") So what's a boy to do? At least he has three-year-old Timmy, who thinks all that stuff is hilarious. But still, I'm sure it must be nice for Kenny to be around same-age peers who share his sense of humor.

So what's the point? That if you want to hang out with 11-year-old boys, you better be prepared for humor that makes you think, "Huh?" or "Eeww"? Well, yeah, that too. But the main point is this: Just as boys and girls are different by (God's) design, you and I are different, as well. Yes, we're both women and moms. We may both be wives, and we may both be die-hard Cubs fans (which takes a special kind of emotional stamina, ha ha).

But still, we're different.

And that's OK. Because that's the way God designed us to be.

He *wants* us to be different. He *delights* in our differences. He doesn't want millions of Beth Moores or Ruth Bell Grahams or Sandi Pattys. He wants me, and He wants you. You may do your makeup every day, dress stylishly, and have your hair cut and highlighted at a salon. Great. I don't do any of those things. But that's equally great.

I may know how to speak or read four languages, play the piano, and enjoy public speaking. Good. Perhaps none of these traits describes you. Equally good.

One of the saddest things in the world is when you see a woman squelching or denying who she was created to be, just because she thinks it would be better if she were more like someone else. When she does this—when you do this, when I do this—the world misses out on enjoying the unique person God had created in her. Worse yet, it misses out on seeing His creativity reflected just as He had intended it to be reflected in her life.

And she herself spends her life miserable, if she's honest, because she's trying to force herself into a mold that's "better" than what God had planned for her.

Yes, if there's something you truly need to do better or differently (in other words, if God says so), then by all means, repent or change. But if you're just trying to be like someone else, stop! It doesn't matter whether or not you're like your mother, your sister, your best friend, or some famous person. God doesn't care at all.

You see, it really doesn't matter whether or not you're "as good as" someone else. What matters is whether you reflect the image of Jesus.

And that's something you can best do not only by clinging to Him, but by being whom He made you to be.

1 Samuel 16:7—"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (NIV).

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books.) She is also a stay-at-home mom with five children.*