

"PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS"

1 Cor. 13:11: "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."

- A. Realize that the verse is out of context.
- B. Approach as a child psychologist.

INTRODUCTION:

I. CERTAIN CHILDHOOD TRAITS SHOULD BE KEPT BY ALL OF US IN SPITE OF THIS PROOF TEXT.

A. Matthew 18:3 - "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

B. THESE CHILDHOOD TRAITS WHICH WE MUST ENDEAVOR TO KEEP ARE:

1. Faith in those who care for Him.

(a) A little child does not worry about the next meal or fear he will have no place to sleep tonight. He has trust and assurance that such will be provided. How much more should God's children trust a loving Father.

(1) Matthew 6:30 - "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

"Fair is the soul, rare is the soul
Who has kept, after youth is past,
All the art of the child, all the heart of the
child,
Holding his faith at last."

(Frank G. Burgess)

- 2. Innocence - Freedom from sin belongs to the child.
- 3. The Spirit of Joy and enthusiasm for living.

- (a) A child looks forward to each day with eager anticipation; and even though heartache may invade his little world, he gets up the next morning anxious to meet the day with new possibilities and challenges.
4. The Spirit of Forgiveness is one of the sweetest traits of a child.
- (a) He may fuss and fight with friends, but he harbors no grudge; his anger is short-lived, and soon he returns to the association of his playmates and remembers the hurt no more.
5. A keen sense of fairness belongs to children.
- (a) How often have you heard children in their play say to each other: "You're not being fair," or "No fair"? They quickly sense unfairness in others and resent all unfairness which they see in adults. Fairness is actually one form of honesty and integrity which should certainly characterize the adult Christian.
6. Freedom from prejudice is a valuable asset of childhood.
- (a) It is actually another aspect of honesty and fairness. In their uncluttered thinking, children are perfectly willing to weigh each person on his own merits - it makes little difference how big a person's bank account is or where he stands on the social register.
7. An enjoyment of simple things is another blessing of childhood.
- (a) He can enjoy picking a daisy, cuddling a puppy or stroking a kitten, more than viewing a mighty metropolis. How blessed we would be if we could benefit from all the wonders of man's ingenuity and scientific accomplishments and still retain enthusiasm and enjoyment of life's simple things.

"The Soul of the Child is the loveliest flower
 That grows in the garden of God.
 Its climb from weakness to knowledge and power,
 To the sky from the clay and the clod.
 To beauty and sweetness it grows under care,
Neglected, tis ragged and wild."

II. AS WE MATURE INTO ADULTHOOD, CERTAIN CHILDHOOD TRAITS ARE TO BE DISCARDED:

1. Selfishness is a characteristic of a very small child.

A. The babe in the crib has no capacity to think of anyone's needs except his own. He couldn't care less about the sleepless nights and unending labor which he causes his parents. He has no thought for the sorrows, problems and heartaches of others. He is concerned only with the things which directly affect him. His whole world centers around his own wishes. Selfishness may lead a child to throw a tantrum, kick and scream, in order to get his way. The immature adult may try a different method but the motive is the same.

(1) King Ahab went to bed and turned his face toward the wall, and pouted because he did not get his way. (IKings 21:4).

2. Cruel frankness marks the childhood years.

A. Children usually say what they think (regardless of how it may hurt others). Some things are better left unsaid and he who says everything he thinks is either a child or a fool.

(1) Proverbs 29:11: "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back."

Illustration: A teacher was trying to teach his high school students the meaning of diplomatic phraseology. One boy in the class said: "I think I understand what you mean. For instance, if I tell a girl, 'Your face would stop a clock', that is stupidity; but, if I say, "When I look into your eyes, time stands still,' that is diplomacy."

3. Discontent - Flitting from one thing to another often characterizes a child.

A. He is seldom interested in one thing very long; he is soon looking for something different to do, something new to amuse him. In his constant search for something to keep himself happy and contented, he feels that if he could just have everything he wanted and do everything he wanted to

do, he could live in a heaven on earth. He fails to understand that real contentment comes from neither but rather is a by-product of a life centered on the invisible values, the spiritual concepts. Learning this lesson is a part of maturity.

4. Inability to accept disappointment gracefully.
 - A. If he has his heart set on a picnic, and if rain should cancel his plans, he may be pretty hard to live with for a while. He finds it difficult to accept the disappointment, to readjust his thinking, and to realize that his little world has not been permanently ruined. So many times in life we must adjust to circumstances, cooperate with the inevitable, alter plans on a moment's notice.

5. A Spirit of Envy usually characterizes children.
 - A. If a neighbor child gets a new bicycle, it is difficult for a child to rejoice over his good fortune. He is more likely to feel unhappy about it, and this is envy. Putting envy out of the heart and learning to "rejoice with them that rejoice," sincerely and genuinely, is a necessary part of spiritual maturity.

6. Impatience is another mark of childhood.
 - A. Time means nothing to them. They feel that their every whim should be satisfied right this minute. Patience must be learned, and the knocks and problems which are a part of life can help to develop it. (Romans 5:3 says: "Tribulation works patience.")

"How poor are they that have not patience!
What wound did ever heal but by degrees? (Shakespeare)

7. Irresponsibility is another trait of childhood.
 - A. The ability to accept responsibility, to persevere, and to complete even unpleasant tasks, comes only with maturity. Christian women who have really grown up know also how to accept responsibility to work, to manage a household, to manage finances. In our nation an average of 100,000 men walk away from their homes every year and never return.

8. A tendency to blame others for their conduct characterizes children.

- A. How many times have you heard a child say: "Look what you made me do"? Many adults never outgrow this trait but go through life blaming others for their misconduct. When Aaron fell into idolatry, he blamed others for his sin. (Ex. 32:22-24). He was not man enough to accept the full responsibility for his own conduct.

III. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE INVOLVES MATURING INTO THE PERFECT MAN IN CHRIST JESUS:

- 1. God expects this of us:
 - A. 1 Peter 2:1-2 - "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby."
 - B. Ephesians 4:15-16 - "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Christ-- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."
 - C. 2 Peter 3:18 - "But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."
 - D. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love."
- 2. The only way to stay young is to mature.
 - A. Thus, life consists of holding on to certain traits of childhood and the putting off of others. Our success in doing this will be the difference of being saved or lost.
- 3. Failure to grow up causes unhappiness all of our lives.
- 4. We need to strive for maturity for our children's sake.

FINALLY:

- 1. This life is but a schooling-ground for something better.
 - A. 2 Peter 1:5-11 - "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; to virtue knowledge; to

knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance; to perseverance godliness; to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

- B. 1 Cor. 13:11 - "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."