

Putting Away Childish Things (1 Cor 13:11)

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Introduction: Some people never grow up!

- A. In both the physical and spiritual realm we must grow or die.
 - 1. In the spiritual realm we must put off old characteristics and put on new.
 - 2. This is why Christians must possess a great humility so that God can mold and lead us in His ways. **(Eph 4:14-15)**.
 - 3. While immaturity will exist for a while in life, there must come a time when we put those things away. **(1 Cor 13:11)**
- B. This change does not come by accident and it does not come without effort.
 - 1. Our lack of maturity will limit what we can learn. **(Heb 5:11-14; 1 Cor 2:6)**
 - 2. The path to maturity however will involve time and suffering. **(Jas 1:2-4)**
 - 3. The impatient quitter will never mature.

I. Childish Traits We Should Retain (Matt 18:2-5)

A. Simple Faith and Trust

- 1. Children will believe what they are told and will trust their parents to the fullest. (Ex. Hard times come, no worry: "Dad will take care of me.")
- 2. What worries will disappear when we have a mature faith in God?
(Isa 12:2; Prov 3:5-6; 1 Pet 3:12-14)

B. A Tender Heart towards others

- 1. Children are very compassionate, tenderhearted and quick to display sympathy.
- 2. We must never lose this willingness to share the hurts of others. **(Rom 12:15; Eph 4:32)**
- 3. Adults can be very cruel when the heart becomes hard.
- 4. Maturity is unselfishness -- responding to the needs of others, often at the expense of one's own desires or wishes.

C. A Willingness to Quickly Forgive

- 1. Children will often fuss, fight and threaten and then 30 minutes later play as if nothing happened!
- 2. Forgiveness is basic to genuine Christianity. **(Col 3:13; Matt 6:12)**
- 3. Some hard hearted adults play the game of the Pharisee, they say they "forgive" while harboring grudges and bitterness all the while.

II. Childish Things to Put Away

A. Tattling and Gossip.

- 1. Children are quick to want justice. Sometimes however stories are told to get them into "good standing" with others.
- 2. Adults often try to hurt another in the background by whispers to selected people. **(Psa 41:5-7; Prov 16:27-28; Lam 3:59-64)**
- 3. A mature faith will teach us the harm of gossip. **(1 Tim 5:13)**
- 4. A mature faith will teach us how to end gossip. We must have an openness to correct a problem. Rather than "roasting" our brethren around the kitchen table, we will move quickly to end any bitterness.

B. A Desire to be the Center of Attention - Pride.

1. While children need a certain degree of attention, when they expect to be the focus of all it can create a “brat”.
2. When adults demand attention they are falling into one of the most serious sins --- pride. **(Gal 6:3-4; Rom 12:3)**
3. A mature faith will be humble because his focus is upon God. He only wants the praise of God. **(1 Pet 5:6; 2 Cor 10:18)**
4. Maturity is humility. It is being big enough to say "I was wrong." And when right, the mature person need not say, "I told you so."

C. Malice and Envy.

1. Sometimes children will destroy the things of another.
2. Envy is a product of pride. It is so sad to see brethren try to destroy another because they think they can “do it better”. **(Gal 5:26,15)**
3. In this atmosphere some will justify anything in their war to destroy another. Nothing will satisfy them short of destruction of another. Who ends up being destroyed? **(Prov 14:30; Matt 27:18)**
4. A mature faith will keep one from these sins of the heart. **(Rom 12:21)**
5. Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence.

D. Instability.

1. Children are very changeable and inconsistent. They often run from responsibility and cannot finish a job. It is sad to see parents like this.
2. It is easy to be zealous and active in the Lord’s work for a period of time, but a mature faith will be active for a lifetime. **(1 Cor 15:58)**
3. Maturity is perseverance, the ability to sweat out a project, or situation in spite of opposition and discouraging setbacks. **(Heb 10:35-36)**
4. Maturity is the ability to make a decision and stand by it. The immature spend their lives exploring endless possibilities, then nothing.
5. We need a mature faith to deal with all areas of our lives, especially our homes.

E. Sullenness and hyper-sensitivity

1. Children are excellent pouters. Some adults are too.
2. Sadly there are some who have more “joy” over an oversight than of the blessings of God. In time these complainers will live for their hurts.
3. How many people have withdrawn and quit the service of the Lord over hurt feelings? Ex. “So and So did not speak to me.”
4. A mature faith will make allowances for others and solve any problems of the heart quickly. **(1 Cor 13:4-6; Eph 4:26)**
5. Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort and defeat, without complaint or collapse.

III. How do we Reach Maturity?

- A. By keeping God in view. **(Matt 5:8; 1 John 3:1-3)**
- B. By never withdrawing or quitting. **(Heb 10:35-38)**
- C. By learning from mistakes. **(Jas 1:5)**

Conclusion: Maturity will take time! Let us not despise those we deem as “immature” but help each to grow in their service to God.