

I Put Away Childish Things

I Corinthians 13:11

*When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child;
when I became a man, I did away with childish things.*

I. The context of this saying shows the importance of a believer loving people.

Paul has written about spiritual gifts (Ch.12) and the importance of love for believers (Ch.13). The Corinthian believers were really battling each other over spiritual gifts. Some felt proud about gifts they had received, and others discouraged that their spiritual gifts weren't flashy. Paul writes to them at the end of Ch. 12, **"I will now show you a more excellent way"** (v.31). That more excellent way is to *"love one another"* in the same manner that God has loved us. God's love is described for us in Chapter 13, and Paul writes several times *"love never ends."* Last week we saw that "spiritual gifts" (tongues, prophecy, etc...) are temporary and will be *"done away with"* when *"the perfect comes"* (v. 10). Paul argues for this with an illustration. You should never grasp too tightly things that you will one day be called upon to set aside.

II. The illustration Paul gives shows why you don't get attached to certain things.

We are all in the habit of *doing away with* things in this life. The reality is that we all grow physically and emotionally and make a transition from childhood into adulthood. When we reach adulthood, childish things are set aside. Childish behavior is not an honor for adults. *"When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things"* (v. 11). Paul's illustration has some spiritual, eternal *application*.

III. The application is that not all spiritual graces and blessings from God are equal.

There are some things more important to God than others. There should be priorities in life. Why? There is coming a day when you will lay aside all other things that are "childish." When is that day? As we saw last week, the text indicates (v. 12) it is the coming of Christ.

A. Material possessions are nothing compared to the grace of loving others.

"It is God who gives you the power to create wealth" (Deut. 8:18). But it is God who also gives you the power to love others. Which gift of grace do you clutch?

B. Physical health is nothing compared to the grace of loving others.

"And the Lord will raise you up" (James 5:15). There is no misunderstanding of the Bible when it comes to the power of God to heal the sick. He can. He does. But the question for all of us today is a simple one: Are we seeking the grace of loving as much as we are the grace of healing? It would seem to me that a man would be a better man dying with a heart full of love than living with a heart full of bitterness.

C. Personal fame is nothing compared to the grace of loving others.

"If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35). If you are clutching recognition by others, you will one day discover vanity is empty.

D. All other spiritual gifts and biblical doctrines are inferior to the grace of loving.

One day we will be fully mature (when we see Him), but until then, we can still grow.