

PUTTING AWAY CHILDISHNESS

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APPLICATION

SUBJECT MATTER	Immaturity
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TEXT	1 Corinthians 13:11
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TITLE	Putting Away Childishness
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“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.”

What Paul is Saying

In 1 Corinthians 13—the famous “Love Chapter”—Paul isn’t just writing about romantic love or general kindness; he is addressing spiritual maturity. The church in Corinth was obsessed with flashy spiritual gifts, public recognition, and proving who was “most spiritual.” Paul uses this verse to show them that acting out of spiritual pride or self-interest is like playground behavior.

“I Spoke as a Child”

Children speak without filters, often driven by immediate feelings, self-interest, or the desire for attention. Spiritual immaturity is reflected in how we speak—using our words to compete, complain, or prove ourselves right.

“I Understood as a Child”

A child’s perspective is limited. They only see what is directly in front of them and struggle to comprehend the bigger picture. Spiritual childhood means having a shallow view of God’s work, focusing only on us rather than God’s broader purpose.

“I Thought [reasoned] as a Child”

Childish reasoning is reactive, shortsighted, and easily offended.

“I Put Away Childish Things”

Growing up requires a deliberate choice. You don’t accidentally mature; you must actively lay down selfish habits, petty grievances, and short-term thinking to make room for unconditional love (agape).

Paul’s core message is simple: The ultimate mark of Christian maturity isn’t how much you know or what gifts you have—it is how deeply and selflessly you love others.

Companion Scriptures

1. 1 Corinthians 14:20

“Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. Regarding evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.”

Takeaway: God wants us to remain innocent when it comes to sin, but sharp, wise, and mature in our spiritual understanding.

2. Ephesians 4:14–15

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves. . . . Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow up in all things into him who is the head, that is, Christ.”

Takeaway: Spiritual adulthood keeps us anchored so we aren’t easily swayed by emotions or culture, helping us grow to look more like Jesus.

Discussion Questions for the Class

1. What is one “childish thing” (like impatience, wanting the last word, or holding grudges) that God is asking you to put away in this season?
2. What does spiritual maturity look like in practical, everyday life—at home, work, or church?

Closing Prayer

“Lord, thank You for loving us right where we are, but loving us too much to leave us there. Help us to recognize the childish attitudes, words, and habits we are still holding onto. Give us the grace to put them down so we can grow into full spiritual maturity. Teach us to speak, understand, and reason with the selfless love of Christ. Amen.”

