

Put Away Childish Things

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. —1 Corinthians 13:11

We expect children to behave in certain ways—to talk, think, and reason like children. We all recognize the sound of a child. For example, we don't expect a teenager to talk and act like a small child. Similarly, we can listen to people who claim to have been Christians for years and yet talk like a baby Christian. Immature speech in people who have been Christians for many years is to their shame, and Paul is challenging the believers over this.

Childhood is marked by a particular way of talking and also a particular way of thinking: "I thought as a child," said Paul. A child is the most selfish person that ever was. As far as he is concerned, the whole world revolves around him. He thinks only of himself and wants immediate gratification. He wants to be loved, but it never crosses his mind to be loving. And some of us, who have been Christians for quite some time, have never moved beyond just wanting to be loved, pampered, and encouraged. When will we take the responsibility and begin to grow up? If we are still waiting for others to show if they care about us, we need to start caring instead.

A third characteristic of children is shallowness. A child is easily influenced, is gullible, and has no discernment. This is why Paul says we should no longer be infants who are tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

So immaturity in Christians is just like the painless pursuit of childhood, characterized by baby talk, selfishness, and shallowness.

Rather, let us demonstrate the love of God through mature speech, selflessness, and discernment. As Christians, let us

love one another and put away childish things.

Excerpted from *Just Love* (Christian Focus Publications Ltd.,
1997).