
Words of Truth

Putting Away Childish Things

By: Brian A. Yeager

Paul, when writing about the cessation of spiritual gifts, said this: *“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”* (I Corinthians 13:8-13).

When Christ left this world He sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Apostles and other faithful Christians (John 16:13). That was a temporary plan. Once there was the completion of the faith and spiritual maturity was accomplished, the Spirit’s work of equipping men for the work was over (Ephesians 4:7-13). Now, we have the fully revealed word that equips us to do all the work God wants us to do (II Timothy 3:16-17).

During the time the Holy Spirit was working, the church was in her infancy. Spiritual maturity could not be accomplished because everything that God wanted man to know had not yet been revealed. Now, there is a greater expectation for you and I. We have all of the information. We are not supposed to be in a continual state of spiritual immaturity. That is what Paul revealed in the text we opened our study with.

Having said all of that, this article is not about the cessation of miraculous spiritual gifts. This article is about maturity. We are going to have a brief study about areas of our lives wherein we [adult Christians] need to be mature. We live in a world of childishness. People have no sense of responsibility or accountability. Let’s begin our study in talking about being adults in spiritual matters.

Being Men And Women In Christ

The statement “act like a man” certainly has Scriptural application (I Corinthians 16:13). Christian men are supposed to act like Christian men. A Christian man is expected to be a source of strength, even during difficult times (II Corinthians 12:10). Even when young, a Christian man should be a clear thinker (Titus 2:6). Man was created to be in positions of authority (Genesis 1:26-28). A Christian man is supposed to lead his family (Ephesians 5:22-6:4). A Christian man is supposed to live his younger years in such a way that when he is older he will be able to be an elder in the Lord’s church (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9). A good man has his steps ordered by the Lord (Psalms 37:23). Yet, in all the strength a man may have, he still has needs he cannot meet on his own. God gave man a help

meet (Genesis 2:18-25). While men may be in authority over women, we cannot live without women either (I Corinthians 11:3; 8-12).

A godly woman is a great thing to behold (Proverbs 31:10-31). Notice some things we can learn about what God expects out of a godly woman from these Scriptures: *"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"* (Titus 2:3-5).

We all should know that the two paragraphs above are very brief in outlining what it means to act like adults in Christ. It should be enough for us all to think about though and add to in our own studies. From those points, I'd like to take a turn in our study in talking about how we need to be adults in carnal things.

Being "Grown Ups"

There will forever be generational gaps. This I am certain of. I see it when I look at younger folks now who have grown up with things different than what I had to live with and through. Likewise, I know those older than me see the same things when they talk to me. However, there are things that we must all grow up in that has nothing to do with what generation you were born in.

Godly men and women need to grow up and take care of themselves (I Timothy 5:8). It is always true that Christians are to be a people who will work to take care of ourselves (Ephesians 4:28 and II Thessalonians 3:10). The world we live in sees this differently though. The world we live in thinks that life should be full of handouts. That is not true (Proverbs 14:23).

Christian men and women need to be grown-ups in realizing what world we live in (I John 5:19). People are not looking out for your soul. What they are doing is looking to make you more like them (Proverbs 1:10-19 and I Peter 4:1-5). If you spend enough time with them, it will work. You will become worldly (Proverbs 13:20 and I Corinthians 15:33). Don't be naïve (Proverbs 14:15).

Christian men and women need to be grown-ups in accountability. If you err, the consequences are because of your actions (Proverbs 1:31, Proverbs 14:14, and Galatians 6:7-9). When you stand before God, you'll answer all by yourself (II Corinthians 5:10). You're responsible for yourself. Live like it!

Conclusion

If you are going to be childish, let it be in malice (I Corinthians 14:20). In other areas of life, be mature. There are thousands of applications to be made to the points we've briefly addressed in this study. The point is, we should not be childish. While we should live without anxiety over the things we cannot control (Matthew 6:24-34), we cannot live carelessly as does a little child. Live life as though your decisions matter (Zephaniah 1:12, Isaiah 32:9-11, and II Peter 3:10-14).