



Changing Childish Behaviors



“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 (woman), I put away childish things.” 1 Corinthians 13:11

That’s when our childish behaviors began – when we were a child. Children are spiritually and emotionally immature. But, just as God did not intend for us to remain a child physically, He never intended for us to remain one emotionally either. A little baby cooing in his crib, or crying for his bottle is cute while he’s in his crib, but to see a grown man cooing in his crib or crying for his bottle is NOT cute – it is a serious case of spiritual and emotional under-development – otherwise known as childish behavior!



Paul, the Apostle, was writing to some of these kind of under-developed men in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 when he said, *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal (minded), as to babies in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you have not been able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal (childish). For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal in your behaviors?”* NOTE: Carnal has to do with our flesh and satisfying the flesh.



The people of Corinth were caught up in strife and division, babies in Christ, because they did not have maturity in the Word of God and the personal relationship with Christ they should have had because of all Paul’s teachings that had been diligently taught to them when he had been with them. They had heard the truth with their ears, but had not taken it into their heart so their minds could be renewed, which would change the way they thought about people, which would make them grow up spiritually and emotionally. The two are twins and cannot grow up without each other. If separated, one or the other will be immature.

There is a big difference between being childish and being childlike. In verse 13 of our first scripture, it says, *“when I became an adult, I put away childish things.”* Childish things are immature, petty, silly, not fit for an adult. But, child like things are innocence, obedience, trustfulness, honesty and forgiveness. Jesus described it as a necessary spiritual quality in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. His disciples came to Him saying, *“Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Then Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in the middle of them, and said, ‘Assuredly I say to you, unless you are converted*



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and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.'" Matthew 18:1-5

As adults, as we grow in spiritual things, we should always be children in openness and honesty but as an adult we should not still be acting and behaving like a child does. From the moment we were born our mind began being programmed by others:

- By affection or lack of affection from parents and teachers.
- By thoughts and ideas that were planted during our childhood and are still there and still affect our thinking.

If our programming was godly and we were told we were sweet, and were told we were loved, and told we would be taken care of and we were important, and were encouraged and praised for everything we tried to do, we would have a built in sense of belonging, and strong self-esteem as someone worth loving – because all this was built into us as children.



But if our programming was ungodly and we were left alone a great deal or left with baby sitters during our tender years, then parents have sent the message that work or pleasure outside the home are more important than you are. The absence of the kind of affection a child needs, or a harsh father and/or a critical mother, or an alcoholic parent, or parents, where something you do is O.K. today but you get punished for it tomorrow and nobody sets boundaries for you, you will grow in physical age, but the emotional behaviors will still be childish because they were never nurtured.

We are all responsible for our own behaviors – the little girl is still in there – and she can be helped to grow up beyond the childish behaviors if they are still in there. Each of us is a little girl and a big girl because the basic problem is seldom identified and corrected and that little girl pops up when it is triggered. When anything comes along that even looks, smells or acts like that childhood trauma – the adult will appear to react, but it's the child inside who is behaving that way.



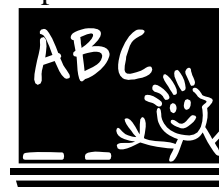
When we don't know why we act the way we do sometimes, we need to tell ourselves, "I am being controlled by an emotion from my past" and begin to look at it and try to trace it back to where it came from. When we get angry at people for reacting to things in a way we can't stand – we have to remember that people act out today what happened yesterday in all situations. When we begin to trace back where those reactions come from, in ourselves, we will begin to "grow up" that little child in us.

We all have those things. While it's true that godly mothers give their children more security to face life's situations – today almost every child experiences devastating circumstances. It doesn't matter if the devastation was deliberate or not, the effect is still there. Learning to trace those emotional behavior problems is very important. If you don't, you are going to cause hurts and misunderstandings in your life and the lives of others, especially your children.

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Some things that form roots of behavior problems that show up in adults are:

- Expectations of A's in schoolwork, C's & D's were not acceptable when it was the best you could do.
- Child who dresses self but it's always wrong, she becomes very self-conscious about herself and her appearance.
- No matter how hard you tried, you couldn't please your parents – this is the most painful when you gave it all you've got.
- Rejection by parents over things out of child's ability to control – grows up feeling no initiative to do anything because no matter what you do it's not enough and will fail.
- Never knowing what you were supposed to do to measure up – no one takes time to show you or explain.
- Needs were met at someone else's convenience – not when you wanted them or needed them.



These are just a few little samples, but whenever you find yourself behaving in an emotionally childish way ask God to set you free and help you to identify the source of the behavior, and find out who is responsible for it, and then forgive them. That's the only way to be set free. Only forgiveness will release the power you have given that person over your emotions. Renew your thinking about yourself. God is working in you. Thank Him for helping you not to act that way. Don't put yourself down any more. Instead, seek the answer.



Act out of your adulthood. When your childish little girl is acting up, say, *“Thank God I'm set free from that behavior because I couldn't handle it as a child, but I can handle it now, as an adult.”* Determine to want to be an emotional adult – go after the things that embarrass and humiliate you when you do them.

Every parent has awesome power to make their children a success, or destroy them. Don't let your childish emotions choose your words to your children. Every person has the Holy Spirit in them to overcome discontentment with circumstances, and to enjoy the blessings they do have. Don't ever forget that being able to see is a blessing, being able to hear, to walk, to speak, to move your hands, to take a bath, have a bed to sleep in, to have children – the greatest blessing.

The truth about your relationship with Jesus and in Jesus will set you free. *“You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* John 8:32. Free from hurts from the past and the necessary forgiveness so you can love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength by His power that works in you.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. This includes training up the child that is in you!



Changing Childish Behaviors

1. When did I begin learning wrong behavior habits?

2. What does carnal mean?

3. Why did Paul call the Corinthians carnal?

4. What is the difference between childish and childlike?

5. Who did Jesus say is the greatest in the kingdom of God?

6. Did Jesus mean little children who never grew up? If not, who did He mean?

7. When I behave or react like a child, is that me?

8. What should I do when I am controlled by an emotion from the past?

9. What should I do when I identify the time, place and person (s) involved in my pain in the past?

10. How do I get rid of childish thinking? (1 Corinthians 13:11)
(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE _____

Changing Childish Behaviors

1. When did I begin learning wrong behavior habits?

When I was a little child.

2. What does carnal mean?

Pertaining to the flesh.

3. Why did Paul call the Corinthians carnal?

Because they had heard the truth with their ears, but not with their hearts.

4. What is the difference between child*ish* and child*like*?

Childish is what children do, childlike is what adults should be in spiritual understanding.

5. Who did Jesus say is the greatest in the kingdom of God?

Little children.

6. Did Jesus mean little children who never grew up? If not, who did He mean?

No, He meant adults who were childlike in their acceptance of Him and His gospel.

7. When I behave or react like a child, is that me?

The little girl inside of you is acting out her pain, but people see you as an adult acting childish.

8. What should I do when I am controlled by an emotion from the past?

Try to trace it back to it's source.

9. What should I do when I identify the time, place and person (s) involved in my pain in the past?

Remember that you can't change anything about it now, except forgive them in order to set yourself free from bitterness, and remove the power they used to have over your emotions.

10. How do I get rid of childish thinking? (1 Corinthians 13:11)

MEMORY VERSE "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child,

I thought as a child, but when I was grown, I put away childish things."