
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

June 15, 2014

When to Remain as Children – and When Not

“Brothers and sisters, don’t be like children in the way you think. Well, be babies when it comes to evil, but be adults in your thinking.”
I Corinthians 14:20 (Common English Bible)

In some things we are to remain as children. Here, Paul tells us that we should be as innocent as babies when it comes to evil. Don’t occupy the mind with the thought, values and behavior of evil. Don’t play games that entertain characters of darkness. Simply, remain at a distance from such matters; do not engage them. Ironically, we achieve stature of faith by our ignorance of evil. To seek personal knowledge of evil things – or aspiring to become experts of its deadly intentions – is not beneficial to the Christian.

But in understanding we are to be adults. Indeed, one of the most helpful defenses against forces of evil is the cultivation of a more spacious mind, a mind that dwells continually upon the things of God. The difficulty Paul is addressing here with the Corinthians is that they are abusing their spiritual gifts, specifically the gift of tongues, and calling attention to themselves rather than to Christ. As a church leader, Paul had to change that. Rather than spectacular demonstrations of spirituality, Paul asks that they engage in the discipline necessary to think through the meaning of the Christian faith. This is the mark of Christian maturity.

Spiritual growth always includes movement from childish thoughts to a deeper reflection and consideration of what God is doing in our lives. A childish thought always seeks expression in childish behavior. Such behavior includes the compulsion to whine when things don’t go as we like or calling attention to personal accomplishments. Yet, this behavior is immature and diminishes our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is thought that cares more about self than the church or Christ.

Bitterness, impulsiveness and selfishness are the products of immature thinking. They are the sure sign that vital thought is underdeveloped and undersized. Such a person lacks the liberty of living fully and the expansiveness of mind to grasp the rich treasure of the children of God.

Diminish in me any immature thought or behavior that places me before the ministry of the church or Jesus Christ. Show me Your most excellent way. In the certain Name of Jesus Christ, I ask. Amen.

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