

# Putting Away Childish Things

by J.R. Miller

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of putting away childish things, such as pouting, envy, and jealousy, in order to grow in maturity and character.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:3, Romans 12:10, 1 Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:14-15, Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:12-14, Hebrews 5:12-14, James 3:16-17, 1 Peter 2:1-2

**Topics:** "Spiritual Maturity", "Childlikeness vs. Childishness"

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## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the distinction between childlikeness and childishness, urging believers to embrace the former while rejecting the latter. He highlights that childlikeness embodies humility, simplicity, and trust, which are essential for entering the kingdom of Heaven, while childishness represents immaturity and weakness that should be left behind as one matures. Miller illustrates how adult behaviors such as pouting, jealousy, and envy reflect a failure to grow up spiritually, and he encourages individuals to cultivate a spirit of grace and humility instead. He calls for a commitment to put away childish behaviors and to embrace a more mature, Christlike disposition in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

There is a wide difference between childlikeness -- and childishness.

Childlikeness is commended as very beautiful in life and disposition. The Master exhorted his disciples to become as little children, and said that until they would do so, they could not enter the kingdom of Heaven. The finest things in character are childlike things -- humility, simplicity, trustfulness, the absence of scheming and ambition, lack of deceit.

But childishness is something altogether different. It is something to get as far as possible away from -- and not something to cultivate. It is one of the things we are to put off and leave behind, as we grow into the strength and beauty of mature manhood. Instead of being noble, the mark of rank and greatness in spiritual life -- it is the sign of weakness, of juvenileness.

Childishness in a child may be endured. "He is only a child," we say of one of infant years, in apology for actions and ways which are not beautiful. But when these childish things appear in one who has come to manhood in years -- we find no excuse for them. When we are children -- we speak as children, we feel as children, we act as children -- but when we become men, we should put away childish things.

Yet there are too many people who keep their childish ways after they are grown up. For example, pouting is not uncommon in quite young children. Something disappoints them, and they turn away in sullen mood, thrusting out their lips and refusing to speak to anyone or to take part in what their companions are doing. It is no wonder the other children in a party, jeer such puerile behavior in one of their number, crying at them, "Pouty!" "Cry baby!" or other taunting epithets.

The lesson of good-naturedly bearing slights, hurts, or defeats -- usually has to be learned by experience, and the lesson is long; it need not be wondered at, therefore, if very young children are sometimes slow in mastering their sensitiveness in this regard.

But every now and then -- and not so rarely, either -- we find full-grown people who have not got beyond the pouting phase. They are very congenial and happy in their relations with others -- while nothing occurs to impinge upon their self-esteem. But the moment anyone seems to slight them, or when one appears to treat them unkindly, or when some scheme or proposal of theirs is set aside -- instantly go out the lips in a childish pout, down come the brows in a bad-tempered frown -- and the offended person goes off in a fit of babyish sulks.

This spectacle is not uncommon among young people in their relations with each other. There are some who demand absolute and exclusive monopoly in their friendships. They are ardent in their devotion to the young person on whom they fasten their affection -- but that person must become wholly theirs, scarcely treating any other one respectfully, certainly showing no cordiality toward anyone. If the object of their attachment fails to be thus "loyal," the doting friend pouts and sulks and whimpers, "You don't care for me any more!"

All envies and jealousies belong in the same class of childish things, which are not only unlovely -- but are also utterly unchristian.

Not infrequently, is this childish spirit manifested in societies and associations, where members are chosen to official places or appointed on committees, or shown other honors. There are apt always to be some among the number, who keep in the best kind of mood when they are filling any position of honor or authority -- but who cannot come down gracefully from the official rostrum. The descent from any elevated position, to the level of common membership, is too much for their stock of magnanimity. They act as if they felt that they should be continued in office indefinitely, and when some other one is chosen in turn to wear the honor which they have worn for a term -- they take it as a personal matter and feel aggrieved. Sometimes they display their hurt feelings publicly; sometimes they say nothing -- but go about afterward with a martyr-like air, as if they were patiently enduring a wrong or injury. In either case, they probably do not take an active part thereafter in the work of the organization, pouting, sometimes, the rest of their days!

These are only illustrations of a most unhappy spirit that is much too common in the world. We all know how such conduct mars the beauty of manliness. Nothing is a better test of character and disposition, than the way one meets defeat, or bears injury. "Blessed are the meek," is a great deal more human beatitude than we are used to think. Commendation is sweet -- but we show a pitiable weakness if we keep sweet only when people are saying complimentary things to us or of us -- and then get discouraged and out of sorts, when the adulation does not come. There is a good teaching which counsels us to prefer others in honor, and when a young man has had a term as an officer or a committee chairman in his society, he ought to be delighted to yield the place to another, and should go back into the ranks with the best of

cheerfulness, to work more earnestly and beautifully than ever, in the unofficial place.

Let us put away childish things forever. Let the young people begin to do so very early. If you find the slightest disposition in yourself to pout or sulk or be envious or jealous, or to play the baby in any way -- you have a splendid chance to do a Christlike thing. Will you do it?

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