



BIG IDEA: The love chapter is calling us out of childishness — and putting these things down isn't punishment. It's how we love each other.

1 CHILDISH SPEECH (1 CORINTHIANS 13:11)

- Imperfect tense — habitual, ongoing. Not “I once said something silly.” Paul is naming a whole season lived in that kind of talk.
- The Corinthians prized flashy speech. Paul has already called their proudest talk a “noisy gong.” Volume isn't maturity. A child can talk all day.
- Complaining. Gossip. Snapping. Performative God-talk. Childish speech is the cheap use of an expensive thing. Patient and kind are speech qualities first.

1 Corinthians 13:11 CSB *When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child...*

1 Corinthians 13:4 CSB *Love is patient, love is kind...*

KEY TRUTH: Your mouth is the loudest thing about you. If it's still operating on a kindergarten budget, the room will know.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 1

1 Cor 13:11 — “...I _____ like a child...”

1 Cor 13:1 — “...I am a noisy gong or a _____.”

1 Cor 13:4 — “Love is _____, love is _____.”

2 CHILDISH UNDERSTANDING (1 CORINTHIANS 13:11)

- The verb is mindset — the angle from which you read the world. Not raw IQ. (Same word as Phil. 2:5 — “have this mind...”)
- A child's world is exactly as big as the child standing in the middle of it. Childish understanding isn't stupidity — it's smallness.
- Worst-case reads. Quick offense. Surface verdicts before evidence. The love-cure is verse 7 — four habits that stretch the frame past the end of your nose.

1 Corinthians 13:11 CSB *...I thought like a child...*

1 Corinthians 13:7 CSB *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

KEY TRUTH: Maturity isn't measured by what you know. It's measured by how wide a frame you can hold around the person in front of you.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 2

1 Cor 13:11 — “...I _____ like a child...”

1 Cor 13:7 — “It _____ all things, _____ all things...”

1 Cor 13:7 — “... _____ all things, _____ all things.”

3 CHILDISH THINKING (1 CORINTHIANS 13:11)

- A bookkeeping word — reckon, count, credit, put on the ledger. The word for what counts as what.
- Same Greek word in verse 5: love “does not keep a record.” Childish reckoning is exactly what love refuses to do.
- Mental files on every slight. “After all I've done for them.” Demanding our own way. We trade twenties for pennies because pennies sparkle. Close the books.

1 Corinthians 13:11 CSB *...I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things.*

1 Corinthians 13:5 CSB *...is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs.*

KEY TRUTH: Maturity isn't a birthday. It's a verdict you render — on the way you used to talk, the lens you used to look through, and the ledger you used to keep.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 3

1 Cor 13:11 — "...I _____ like a child..."

1 Cor 13:5 — "...does not keep a _____ of wrongs."

1 Cor 13:11 — "When I became a man, I _____ childish things."

APPLICATION

Pick one. Put it down this afternoon.

- One mouth** — Name the cheap talk you keep reaching for. Complaining? Gossip? Snapping? Put it down before Sunday closes.
- One frame** — Pick one person you've been reading small. Widen the frame this week. Let love bear it. Let love believe the better story.
- One ledger** — Whose name is still in your book? Close it. Throw the notebook in the fire. Stop counting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul drops a line about being a child right in the middle of the love chapter. Why is that strange — and what is he doing on purpose by putting it there?

2. "Volume isn't maturity. A child can talk all day." Where in your own talk this week has the volume been up but the weight been down?

3. "Childish understanding is smallness, not stupidity." When have you read somebody small in the last month? What was the wider frame you missed?

4. The Greek for "reasoned" in verse 11 is the same word as "record" in verse 5. What does it mean that childish reckoning is the exact thing love refuses to do?

5. "Maturity isn't a birthday. It's a verdict." Which of the three — speech, understanding, or reckoning — does Paul have his finger on for you right now?

MY TAKEAWAY

ANSWER KEY

S1: spoke · clanging cymbal · patient · kind

S2: thought · bears · believes · hopes · endures

S3: reasoned · record · put aside