

## "You're Acting Like a Child!" - Part 2

As we noted in part one of this article, being told that you're acting like a child could be a compliment or a rebuke. If you are humble, trusting, harmless and hungering for spiritual food as a baby hungers for physical food then you are indeed acting like a child and are to be commended. Now let's consider the negative side of the phrase, "You're acting like a child!"

One is acting like a child in a bad way when he refuses to take responsibility for his actions. "I didn't do it" or "Not me" are often a child's favorite answers when asked about a broken vase, a spilled drink, a marked wall, etc. Even if it's obvious that he is the culprit, somehow he feels obligated to direct the blame away from himself. This shifting of the blame puts us in mind of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 as each blamed someone else for their transgression. It reminds us of Aaron who commanded the golden calf to be crafted and then said, "thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief." (Exodus 32:22). It brings to mind king Saul who, when confronted in his sin, said, "the people did it". (I Samuel 15:21). Some today continue in this childishness by blaming their sins on their upbringing, their environment, even God, suggesting that He made them the way they are. Sadly, their delusion that someone else is responsible for their sins will burst like a bubble on the day of judgment as "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Corinthians 5:10). "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12).

One is also acting like a child in a bad way when he tries to lie his way out. Have you ever heard a child try to lie his way out of trouble? This is actually an expansion of the previous point. "I didn't do it" is a lie when the child actually did do the wrong, but then he might keep on going from there. He might say the vase was broken by a shot from an alien's ray gun or the drink was spilled when a 90 foot monster stomped on the ground and caused an earthquake or the wall got marked up because the dog was trying to learn how to draw and couldn't find any paper. Those are ridiculous lies, aren't they? As parents we can see right through them. But they are no more ridiculous than the lies that Christians can tell when they're doing wrong and don't want to admit it. For example, have you ever asked an unfaithful Christian why he or she has stopped coming to worship and Bible classes? After the obligatory, "I know I should be there more," they come up with a string of excuses (lies) that just don't stand up to careful examination. Just like the child hopes that his parents are buying his story for his wrongdoing, so unfaithful Christians hope that fellow Christians will buy their stories. This is when the unfaithful adult has to be treated like a child and confronted. To the child we would say, "Come on now, you don't expect me to believe that, do you?" To the adult we would say, "Do you really think that you can fool God?" "Be not deceived; God is not mocked..." (Galatians 6:7).

Finally, one is acting like a child in a bad way when he continues in spiritual immaturity. Having earlier rebuked the Corinthians for being "babes in Christ" (I Corinthians 3:1ff), Paul exhorted in I Corinthians 14:20, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." There is no excuse whatsoever for a Christian to be childish when it comes to spiritual knowledge. God's Word is all-sufficient (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3) and not difficult to follow (I John 5:3). Those who continue in spiritual infancy do so of their own choice and at their own peril (Hosea 4:6).

Take the time today to examine your life. Is it time for you to start "acting like a child" in some ways and start "growing up" in other ways?

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