When we face our childishness, God helps us embrace childlikeness.

INTRODUCTION:
– Before proceeding in 1 Cor 13:11, let’s review the preceding message:
  1. We each have an “inner child of our past” affecting us today.
  2. For childlike spiritual growth, we must confront our childish ways.
  3. When God’s light exposes childishness, we need a “rising” response.
  4. We make room for growth by katargeo: “put childish ways behind” us.
  5. We replace immature behaviors by adopting the ways of love.
– The 2nd part of v.11 (“When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.”) helps us confront, not abandon, our inner child. It’s part of us! To put the Love Chapter into practice, we need to know and understand our inner child, so that we can draw on its proper function of childlikeness.

HOM.idea. The 1st part of v.11 can guide this self-understanding: “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.”

I. “When I was a child,” Means God Had a Purpose for Us Being One
A. God equips infants for rapid growth with reflexes that are both a necessity and a divine illustration [Breastfeeding depends on an amazing set of reflexes: a baby’s rooting, latching, and sucking, coupled with a complex maternal let-down reflex from nipple stimulation; learning this in advance HS biology ended my adolescent doubts about there being a Creator.]
  1. Babyhood needs nurture for growth, and God that need to tell us of an ongoing need. (Babies naturally “crave” momma’s milk, but as we become distracted by the world, we must be reminded to “crave” God’s spiritual nurture—1 Pet 2:2, Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.)
  2. Babies need parents. (Maternal instincts illustrate God’s caring nurture—Isa 66:11a,13a (GW), You will nurse and be satisfied from her comforting breasts.... As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.)
B. God equips children to learn by giving them curiosity & openness to new experiences, with sponge-like ability to soak up knowledge. (They receptively imitate what they see and hear from parents.)
  1. This receptivity in youth is the key to learning and a key feature of childlikeness. (Many Jews rejected Jesus with their childish
TWO CONCEPTS: 
1. This word “thought” can mean “had feelings.” [An emotion is defined as “a state of mind derived from one’s circumstances, mood, or relationships.”] 
   a. Knowing each other’s feelings is relationally crucial for us, so God made them visible on faces. [6 facial expressions built-into all babies in every culture: joy, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust.]
   b. Feelings are good, but they can be misguided in childish ways.
2. Emotional dysfunctions in past home-life can be passed on to us.
   a. If we grew up where worrying or fretting was normal behavior, our inner child may get anxious about any perceived threat. (God’s remedy is again, a childlike self-composure—Psa 37:7. Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.)
   b. If prolonged grief was how our family handled losses, common upsets can bring on depression. (Childish discouragement from life’s ups-and-downs can be transformed by childlike, receptive trust in God—Psalm 43:5 (HCSB). Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God. — Counting our blessings stimulates praise!)

C. Immature logic—“When I was a child, I reasoned like a child.”
   a. Some ideas from youth can tyrannize an adult life. (If raised by perfectionists, the inner child never “measures up”; if parents were too indulgent, the inner child has to get its will and way.)
   b. Childlike receptivity allows God to re-Parent us by bestowing mature, sound logic—Psa 111:10a. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding.

CONCLUSION:
– This message merely scratches the surface. We’ll learn more about our inner child’s assets and liabilities in exploring the Love Chapter. But hold on to this idea: When we face our childishness, God helps us embrace a childlikeness that makes us eager to learn how to love.