> *“Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature adults.”*
> 1 Corinthians 14:20 (NIV)

QUESTION:
Praise the Lord! I would like to understand the meaning of this verse in 1 Corinthians 14:20.

ANSWER:
This verse, written by the Apostle Paul, encourages believers to grow spiritually in their understanding and discernment. Let’s unpack it carefully.

Paul contrasts two attitudes: being like children in *thinking* versus being like infants concerning *evil*. This paradox highlights an important spiritual principle.

1. Being “children” in our thinking refers to immaturity in

understanding God’s ways, wisdom, and spiritual matters. In this passage, Paul urges believers not to remain spiritually naive or immature. Children naturally have limited knowledge and understanding; they are easily confused and influenced. Paul wants the Corinthian church and us to mature in spiritual wisdom, discernment, and comprehension of God’s truth. This means we should seek deeper knowledge of Scripture and grow in godly insight (Hebrews 5:12-14).

2. Being like infants in regard to evil means to be innocent or inexperienced with evil to avoid and reject it entirely, just as babies are shielded from complex, harmful realities. This innocence involves refusing to engage with sin or be corrupted by it. The idea is not ignorance but purposeful innocence: we should not become worldly or cynical about evil but rather be pure and untainted by it (see also Matthew 18:3; Psalm 119:9).

This is echoed in another Pauline passage:

> *“I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.”*

> Romans 16:19b
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> (NIV)

Here, Paul calls for wisdom in doing good and innocence regarding evil a healthy balance of maturity and purity.

- Spiritual Maturity: Paul’s instruction reminds us that Christian growth involves gaining solid understanding of God’s Word and living by it, not remaining childish in faith or easily swayed by false teachings (1 Corinthians 14:20, 13:11).

- Innocence toward evil: God desires His people to be “in the world but not of the world” (John 17:14-16). This means rejecting sinful patterns and influences while remaining wise and mature in faith.

- Discernment: We are called to discern what to accept and what

to reject. Not every cultural trend, idea, or behavior benefits our spiritual walk. For example, being unaware or uninterested in worldly distractions (such as secular music promoting ungodly values or harmful habits like gambling) can protect our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:8).

- Life in God’s Word: Maturity grows through deep engagement with Scripture. The Word of God is our foundation and guide for spiritual growth and discernment (Psalm 119:105).

Not knowing every detail about the world or cultural trends is not sinful, and it won’t hinder your spiritual growth. Instead, filter what you expose yourself to reject what harms you (be “infants” toward evil), and grow in understanding and faith through God’s Word (be “mature” in your thinking).

God bless you richly as you grow in wisdom and innocence!

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