

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

the Essentials

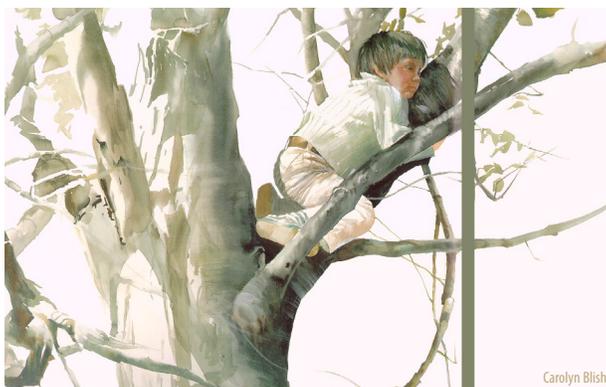
WHEN A CHILD, the minutia of life was an endless fascination for me. In detail I knew the texture of the bark of the hackberry tree that bore my backyard tree house. The nooks and crannies of our garage's attic were a catacomb of discovery and imagination, in which I fashioned forts and caves, and secret dwellings. I knew the aroma of the first day of spring, and the excruciating cold of delivering newspapers on a winter's eve. I was familiar with every bend, every tide pool and miniature cataract of the tiny creek that meandered behind Franklin School.

As I grew older, the objects of my fascination changed. I discovered cars, and sports—and girls. But I still had the time and luxury to know them all in lingering detail: It was important that I knew the various models and types of cars. I read books about baseball, played in Little League, and knew the rich, leathery smell of my glove's palm, and the comfortable feel of swinging my own bat. And, of course, by a certain age the fairer sex became a powerful distraction from just about everything else. Suddenly my clothing, the cut of my hair, the scented liquid I applied after a shower, the popular songs playing on the radio—all became very important to me.

Life, during my youth, consisted of all these small things—absorbed and memorized, pigeon-holed, categorized—that became the catalogue of everything important. Small things were important because youth experience life by minutes and hours. Time passes slowly for the young.

Time for adults, on the other hand, passes at breakneck speed. During some hazy, unrecorded point in my adult life,

small things became less important—almost invisible. Youth experience their life through a microscope, down to every tiny detail, while adults experience life through a wide-angle lens. The teenage girl knows the eating and grooming habits of the very latest pop heartthrob, but the adult woman already has her attention filled to capacity with the raising of her children, management of house and husband, or the daily rigors of the workplace.



Carolyn Blish

I no longer have the luxury of studying the bark on each tree; I must do my work, then move on. The vehicle I drive is no longer selected for its appeal to others, but for its low price, and its reliability in moving me from Point A to Point B. I no longer listen to the popular music of the day; I listen to the news and the weather.

Time and its activities change between childhood and adulthood because of the necessary maturity of responsibilities. Most adults have had the opportunity to sift out of their life that which is inconsequential; adults have prioritized out of their lives much of the nonessentials of childhood to make room for the essentials of surviving in a hard world. Much of the contrast, therefore, can be explained by the need for

basic time-management. But that does not explain it all.

Once we are born, we immediately begin our journey to the eternity of our choice—we begin the journey to whatever lies on the other side of our ultimate earthly demise. The only difference between the youth and the adult, is that the adult knows this; the misguided youth considers himself immortal.

The unbeliever shrugs off eternity as either myth, or an inevitable fate outside his capacity to change. In either case it becomes something to disregard. The believer, too, has a choice in how he reacts to what (for him) will be a more pleasant end. Many a Christian thinks of heaven with the same disregard as unbelievers: *It is out there; it is inevitable; it is a good thing, but there is nothing I need to do about it. Therefore, I will not think about it.*

Other Christians, however, have taken the next transitional step. Just as they left behind the minutia of childhood in favor of the substantial of adulthood, they are now leaving behind the inconsequential of this world, in favor of the eternal of the next.

They have already taken their first step into eternal life.



But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18

