

#7 PROPERTIES OF LOVE: DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH (1 Cor 13:4-7)

A. Remember the theme of 1 Corinthians 13.

1. It doesn't matter how gifted we are, or how much knowledge we have, or how great our faith, or how generous & sacrificial we have been – *if we have not love these things mean nothing.*
2. Love is perfectly described for us in verses 4-8.
 - a. If we will live our lives by that description of love, then we will find ourselves growing more like our Heavenly Father, because we will be fashioned (molded) into the image of His Son (1 John 4:8, 18; Rom 8:29)—*we will become less self-centered & more God & Heaven centered.*

B. We'll introduce this lesson on love with one passage.

Eph 4:15-16 – but, **speaking the truth in love**, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — 16 from whom the whole body, joined & knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

1. Paul said that truth & love go hand in hand with spiritual growth & congregational unity.
2. Either one without the other renders the other ineffective or disingenuous (insincere, untruthful).

C. Truth Needs Love.

1. In order to link the two, we have to guard against two extremes: (1) Teaching or telling the truth with malice. (2) Having so much “sympathy” that we fail to teach or stand for the truth.
2. God has inseparably linked the truth with love (1 Pet 1:22; John 13:34 – note obedience to truth & the response of love).
3. Christians cannot choose, at any given point in time, truth or love; we must always choose truth AND love in the course of our lives.
4. In fact, the reason God gave us truth (John 17:17) is so that we might know how to express our love to Him, which we do by keeping His commandments, which are true – so truth needs love.

D. Love Needs Truth.

1. We're living in a culture where people believe that it's not always loving to tell the truth.
 - a. Many would say, "If telling the truth or teaching God's word is going to hurt someone's feeling then it shouldn't be done".
 - b. This implies that there is a type of love that has so few standards, & such little conviction, that it's nothing more than pious sounding sweetness.

Laura Bush (Larry King): "When couples are committed to each other & love each other, then they ought to have...the same sort of rights that everyone has. I understand totally what George thinks & what other people think about marriage between a man & a woman -- & it's a real reversal for that, to accept gay marriage." (Love does not rejoice in iniquity, cf. [1 Cor 6:9-10](#))

2. So love cannot approve of everything, it cannot participate in many things; love cannot be neutral when it comes to truth.
 - a. Love by its very nature will always consult the truth in order to discern between good & evil (note, love then obedience: [John 14:15](#); [Rom 13:8](#); [1 Thess 4:9](#)).

[So truth is not really truth & love is not really love unless they are working in conjunction with one another.

And that's why Paul, in the eighth & final anti-love trait, provides a perfect conclusion when he says: Love "*does not rejoice in iniquity (at wrongdoing), but rejoices in (with) the truth*" ([1 Cor 13:6](#)).]

I. LOVE DOES NOT REJOICE IN INIQUITY

A. Love does not derive joy & pleasure from someone's sins.

1. Jesus did not rejoice in Jerusalem's iniquity, He wept over it ([Luke 19:41](#)).
2. Paul did not threaten the false teachers, he wept over their state & the harm they would do ([Phil 3:18](#)).
3. Another example of rejoicing in someone else's sin than by the response people make to actors & comedians.
 - a. Does it give us pleasure to watch a love scene? ...or to watch an evil man bludgeoned to death?
 - b. Do we enjoy watching the shows that feature people who can talk to the dead or who can see the future?

- c. Does it make us laugh when the evening talk show hosts & their quests fill the airwaves with profanity, self aggrandizement & sexually explicit talk?
4. Our responses to another's sins are just a magnification of our deep seated attitudes about sin (iniquity), which we are to hate (Psa 119:104, 128, 163).
- a. And if we rejoice in another's sin, is it because it makes us think we are holier than that, OR is it because we have a secret craving for sin? –*Either way, love does not rejoice in sin.*
 - b. One author said, "What a man rejoices in is a fair test of his character. To be glad when evil prevails, or to rejoice in the misfortunes of others is indicative of great moral poverty."
5. Do we or have we rejoiced in iniquity? A test:
- a. Could you rejoice with a newly wedded couple that had no divine right to be married because of his or her infidelity (Matt 19:9; Mk 10:11-12)?
 - b. Could you rejoice with someone who won the lottery (Luke 12:15; Heb 13:5)?

- c. Could you rejoice to see children & grandchildren succeed in the world at the expense of their souls (Matt 6:33; Col 3:1-2)?

B. Love does not derive joy & pleasure from personal sins.

1. The Corinthians are an example of rejoicing in their own sins (1 Cor 5:1-2).

[If you are showing signs of weakness in the area of loving iniquity, it will help to remember two things.]

C. Sin Insults God.

Ps 69:7-9 – Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. 8 I have become a stranger to my brothers, & an alien to my mother's children; 9 Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, & **the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.** (cf. John 2:17).

1. David said that whenever someone insulted God, then he (David) was insulted too.
2. For that same reason, Jesus cleansed the Temple, twice, of the religious racketeers.

3. Both David & Christ derived no pleasure from the sins of others, because they knew, with certainty, that all sin insulted the holiness of God.
4. So love is discriminating. If you love someone, then you're not going to do anything that hurts or insults that person—*think of how that applies to our love for God.*

[A second thing that will keep us from rejoicing in iniquity is to remember that...]

D. Sin Deserves Death.

Rom 6:23 – For *the wages of sin is death*, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. How can we rejoice (joy, pleasure, satisfaction) in something that results in one's being eternally separated from God (*Isa 59:1-2; Ezek 18:4, 20*)?
 - a. We ought to feel the greatest sadness for those who sin whom we can never reach, but we should feel even greater sadness for those who sin within our reach.

[There is no cause for rejoicing in sin or iniquity.]

If you claim to love God & the people around you, there are two things you never do with sin: *delight* in it (*1 John 2:15-17; Job 31:29; Ezek 33:11*), or *invite* it in (*Jas 1:14-15; 1 Pet 2:11*).]

II. LOVE REJOICES IN TRUTH

[This is the reason *love* does not rejoice in iniquity: its joy & pleasure is entirely in the *truth* (*John 17:17*).]

A. Truth Taught & Lived.

1. People throw around the word “tolerance” today as a way of saying that we ought to accept every Bible teaching, philosophy & lifestyle as valid.
2. People are saying, “We may not all believe the same thing, but we’re going to fellowship one another because we love each other.”
3. That attitude misses the most fundamental fact about love: *love cannot rejoice in error; love only rejoices in the truth.*

- a. We cannot share our joy with those who don't teach or live by the truth (2 John 9-11; 3 John 9, 11).
- b. On the other hand - if we love - then we will share our joy with those who teach & live by the truth (1 John 2:3; 2 John 6; 3 John 3-8).

CLOSING

- A. **How can we restructure** our minds to stop rejoicing in iniquity & to start rejoicing in the truth?—*that's what a person who loves will do.*
 - 1. My brother & his wife have a routine they go through. When they leave a place, before they say anything negative or offer any constructive criticism, they have to talk about the things they enjoyed (things that helped them).
 - 2. You see, Satan, through temptation, can get us so focused on the things that are wrong (in a situation or with the people) that we fail to rejoice in what is right—*that's what Satan did to Eve: surrounded by Paradise he focused her attention on the one action that was sinful.* (cf. 1 John 2:15-17; Gen 3:1-5)
 - 3. But when we rejoice in truth & in good behavior, we actually encourage more of the same—*that is why Jesus told the sinful woman to "Go & sin no more"*.

1 Thess 5:9-11 – For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore **comfort each other & edify one another**, just as you also are doing.

1 Cor 14:12 – Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, **let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.**

- 4. It is elementary, but we often miss the mark: love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

B. **We need** to realize that love is the greatest challenge to our human nature.

- 1. The love God teaches us about takes more inner strength, discipline, faith, & commitment, than just about any other Christian trait.
- 2. So much of what the world calls love, is not love, but an appeal to our carnal human nature to show tolerance for sin (Isa 5:20).

Rom 12:9 – Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.

- 3. Genuine love will always hate evil & hold fast to good.

Summary:

Shun the temptation to desire sin (1 John 2:15-17).

Set aside criticism & look for the good (Gen 3:1-5).

Encourage good behavior (1 Thess 5:9-11; 1 Cor 14:12).

Be genuine or sincere in your love for truth (Rom 12:9).

- C. **What about God**, does He follow His own standard for love? Always, & in every way!

Eph 4:29-30 – Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Psa 147:11 – *The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him*, in those who hope in His mercy.

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:

Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible: Acts 2; 3; 13; 17; Rom 10:17

Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior: Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

Repent of your sins: Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ: Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins: Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge: Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48