**Love Does Not Rejoice In Unrighteousness (SR: 1Cor. 13:4-8a)**

The full impact of this statement is seen in considering it as a contrast to the expression that follows: “Love rejoices with the truth.” In a society that denies objective truth, sincere love CANNOT exist. It is therefore the duty of Christians to reject all evil no matter what the source and rejoice in the truth instead.

**I. Definitions**

A. “Rejoices” we understand fairly well. It conveys gladness and joyfulness.

B. “Unrighteousness” (*adikia*) is what is unjust, a deed that violates law and justice.

1. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Love does not rejoice when sin is committed. It is not glad to see people fall into sin. Love is never glad when others do wrong.

2. Knowing sin brings punishment, love cannot rejoice in wrong or the fact that it was done. As one paraphrase reads, “love does not savor evil.”

**II. Some Who Rejoiced in Unrighteousness**

A. Jeremiah charged Israel with rejoicing in evil (Jer. 11:15).

1. Jeremiah’s great theme is that of judgment against the people because they are deserving of it. Judah’s moral condition is so bad that God says it is USELESS to pray for them.

2. They are sacrificing to God, but there is no heart-felt grief that they are violating His law. They felt God would forgive if they followed the standard ritual and listen to comfortable preaching.

B. Some don’t even go through hypocritical acts of worship, they just enjoy unrighteousness outright.

1. Herodias was one. She was apparently pleased that she accomplished her purpose.

2. Ahab got out of a bed of mourning to go claim Naboth’s vineyard. He rejoiced, but it was evil. (1 Kings 20-21) Likewise, Haman was exceedingly pleased at the prospect of hanging Mordecai (Esth. 3-4).

3. The Edomites saw Israel being defeated and rejoiced (Obadiah 12). The Ammonites were happy in being against Israel (Ezek. 25:1-7). Seeing the fate of Israel, they rejoiced with utmost glee (Ezek. 25:6f).

4. The NT refers to some who rejoice at unrighteousness. The proud boasters are one type (Jms 4:16). Rom. 1:32 is another. All such rejoicing is evil.

5. Peter gives Balaam as an example of evil rejoicing (2Pet. 2:15). How many today rejoice at financial or physical profit gained from wrongdoing?

**III. The Proper Attitude Toward Unrighteousness**

A. The attitude of God is preeminent.

1. God does not do that which is unrighteous (Deut. 32:4). His nature is righteous. We should live accordingly (2Chron. 19:7). We have a God of whom we can say, “He is right.”

2. God is love. Love doesn’t rejoice in iniquity. God must rejoice in that which is right (Rom. 9:14).

3. The attitude of Christ is no different. He hates iniquity (Heb. 1:8f). Not only did He teach the way of righteousness, He lived it as well!

B. Paul’s attitude toward lawlessness is demonstrated. He opposed it (Gal. 2:5).

1. Sometimes Christians are accused of lacking love because they speak so strongly against sin. They are told to be more “loving”. Paul was a man of great love, yet he withstood unrighteous teaching.

2. He even refused to tolerate the hypocrisy of a fellow Apostle (Gal. 2:11). You never find any expression of joy or happiness at sin in his life after his conversion or in the lives of others (1Tim. 1:15).

C. What must our attitude be?

1. We must forsake all unrighteousness (2Tim. 2:19). Those who get pleasure in unrighteousness are condemned (2Thess. 2:12). If we love God we will get as far from unrighteousness as we can (James 4:7f).

2. That means we will not be happy at the calamities that befall our enemies (Prov. 24:17). To enjoy sin is to give consent to it in others (Rom. 1:32). We cannot share in unrighteousness (2Cor. 6:14-7:1).

**IV. The Wages of Unrighteousness**

A. Iniquity has its natural fruit (Job 4:8).

1. This is a law of God that cannot be avoided (Ps. 7:14-16). God’s law of sowing and reaping has not been annulled (Gal. 6:7f). We face His judgment (Ps. 36:12; Rom. 6:23).

2. God has made clear the destiny of the unrighteous (Rom. 2:7-9).

B. How can we overcome evil ways and thoughts?

1. We must first learn of God and His love for us. We must reciprocate that love. The more we learn of God and His will, the more we shall seek after His Word (Acts 20:32; 1Pet. 2:1f; Prov. 2:10-12).

2. Attitudes toward evil are often as important as our actions. Let us not only have a hatred of sin because of our love for God, but let us show our dislike by fighting it.

Yet there are times when God’s people rejoice in iniquity (Matt. 5:10-12). Our rejoicing is because we obeyed God and persecution has resulted. However, rejoicing in our own sins or of the sins of friends and family is wrong. If we are to love with sincerity, we must reject evil and stand for Truth. Would you take that stand today and put on a true heart of love?