

## Love Does Not Rejoice in Wrongdoing, but Rejoices in the Truth By Wendy Wood



**Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.** The original Greek language use *adikia* for wrongdoing. This is translated as “unjust” or “unrighteous”. And “truth” is *al theia* which is the truth pertaining to God. Truth pertaining to God are things that are righteous or “right with God”. The character of God is righteous; He always does what is right. Obedience to God’s word is righteousness. So love approves and celebrates what God declares to be right. Conversely, love never approves of or celebrates what God says is wrong. Any thought, word, action, or desire that aligns with God is righteous and should be rejoiced in. But any thought, word, action, or desire that falls short of God’s character and word must not be enjoyed. Romans 12:9 tells us “abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good”. It might seem obvious to hate evil and love good. But living this out with sinful hearts requires more than just agreeing with these statements.

Consider how this might look in your life.

Love does not enjoy hearing about someone else's sin. This may be a celebrity who's exploits make the news. It might be a friend who was able to "get back" at her husband who wronged her.

Love does not enjoy watching other people sin. This includes watching sin on your favorite television show. Love does not enjoy watching unmarried people live together or watching characters make sarcastic, hurtful comments at someone else's expense.

Love does not take pleasure in watching evil happen to others. Maybe a murderer in prison was murdered by other inmates or a television show where the hero of the story exacts vigilante justice.

Love does not enjoy watching others suffer loss or make a mistake. Love is compassionate and sympathizes with others struggles and errors.

Love does not enjoy making people feel foolish or uncomfortable. This may be evident in times when you want others to know you are right or correct someone's speech or fact rather than being gracious.

Love does not enjoy exposing other people's sin. Maybe someone you don't like very much sinned and you enhance your position in the group by gossiping about it. Love is grieved by the sins in the world - the violence, brutality, and crime that happens in the world daily and is reported on the news.

The things that we are glad about and enjoy reveal our heart's desires. When we feel good about anything sinful, we reveal our desire for self-righteousness. We enjoy the feeling that we would never do such a terrible thing. We are way better than that sinner! We feel superior to those who sin and take pleasure in "not being like other men". We are the Pharisee standing in the temple praying loudly, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector" (Luke 18:11). Instead of being grateful and celebrating Christ's righteousness and the righteousness we have through faith in Him, we pridefully congratulate ourselves that we've never murdered or committed adultery or whatever "worse" sin we've witnessed. Our hearts reveal our desire to feel superior rather than be grieved at what grieves God. To have a heart after God's heart, we must be sad and pained by any and all sin, and especially our own.

Love rejoices with the truth. Love celebrates what is revealed as good in God's word. Any obedience to God's word is to be celebrated. When a friend who has been

struggling with a sin excitedly shares with you how she is growing, this is the time to celebrate with her, not be jealous that you continue to struggle and are jealous of her sanctification. When someone confronts your sin and speaks truth to you from God's word, that is time to celebrate that God's word is right and be grateful for correction. When a sinner repents because of the truth of the gospel, love celebrates.

Love rejoices with the truth of Jesus. Jesus came to us with grace and truth (John 1:17). Jesus perfectly lived out God's character and God's word. Love celebrates Christ's righteousness. Love celebrates that any believer in Christ is covered by His perfect life and has His robes of righteousness covering their sin. So you express joy and gladness in Christ's life? Do your family members see you rejoicing in the truth of Christ as you go to Him for forgiveness, strength, hope, and peace. Do you display joy that you are forgiven and in relationship with God because of what Christ has done?

Love rejoices with truth when honesty is demonstrated. We as sinners are so quick to fib, stretch the truth, exaggerate, tell half-truths, leave out the inconvenient parts of a story, embellish, or deceive in some way to make ourselves look better. Maybe you blameshift and put the responsibility on others. After all, you reason, you wouldn't have gotten mad if he hadn't done *that*. Yet the truth of God's word is clear that everything that proceeds from our mouth comes from the heart. Love does not shade the truth. Love seeks to be honest, open and takes responsibility for thoughts, words, actions, and desires. When others are honest, we should be rejoicing.

John MacArthur said;

“Love does not focus on the wrongs of others. It does not parade their faults for the entire world to see. Love does not disregard falsehood and unrighteousness, but as much as possible it focuses on the true and the right. It looks for good, hopes for good, and emphasises good. It rejoices with those who teach and live truth...Love appreciates the triumphs of ordinary folk. Our children are built up and strengthened when we encourage them in their accomplishments and in their obedience. Love doesn't rejoice in falsehood or wrong, but its primary business is to build up, not tear down, to strengthen, not weaken.”<sup>19</sup>

We must always remember that we cannot love this way on our own. “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). We must have the indwelling Holy Spirit at work in us

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<sup>19</sup> First Corinthians commentary, John MacArthur.

to love this way. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). We need to pray and ask God to help us love this way as we seek to put these things into practice.

Application:

1. What stands out to you as you read about love not rejoicing in wrongdoing but rejoices in what is right?
2. What are some ways that you rejoice in sin?
3. What are some ways that you should be grieved by sin more?
4. How do you demonstrate that you celebrate righteousness?
5. How do you need to show you celebrate righteousness more?