

Love Does Not Take into Account a Wrong Suffered

I Corinthians 13:5

The phrase we are studying this morning from the NAS is translated in other ways in your Bible. If you are using the ESV or RSV it is simply the word *“resentful.”* The NIV translates it *“Love keeps no record of wrongs.”* The Living Bible translates it *“Love holds no grudges.”* The verb Paul uses here means ‘to calculate.’ It is an accountant’s word used for entering an item in a ledger to not be forgotten. “Resentment is our memory of a painful, angry past” Lewis Smedes. The question for all of us this morning is, “How in the world can I not keep a record of wrongs that I suffer at the hands of others?”

I. I am absolutely convinced that God keeps no record of my wrongs.

If you were to go up to the average person on the street and ask, “Does God keep a record of your wrongs?” he would answer “yes” and be right—this is judgment (see Romans 12:19). The Good News is how a sinner is able to escape what the Bible calls “the coming wrath.” Many believe they can promise God to be better; or they can compare favorably to others. Some try selfless acts of repentance, contrition, or religion in order to obtain God’s favor. We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24). Justification is a word from the courts of law. In God’s courtroom, the wrongdoer is either justified or condemned. Justified is to be declared perfectly righteous. But how can this be? We receive the righteousness of God through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:22). It’s the great exchange. It is an axiom that our vertical relationship with God is reflected in our horizontal relationships.

II. I know that God never wastes any of my experiences or sorrows.

It’s what allowed Joseph to forgive his brothers and bless them with kindness and food. “As for you, you meant evil, but God intended it for good, do not be afraid” (Genesis 50:20). The absolute sovereignty of God over your affairs and His transcendent goodness are real. You may not know how it works, but it shouldn’t cause you to sit in the dark until you do. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good” (Romans 8:28). Do you? You may not grasp how this works, but don’t sit around in the dark until you do. Flip the switch.

III. I make a distinction between wrongs suffered by me and those suffered by others.

Resentment over the former is called hate; resentment over the latter is called honor. The refusal to keep a record of wrongs perpetrated against yourself is an act of genuine love, but God calls on us to protect the weak, the persecuted and the defenseless people in our world. “Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 82:4).

IV. I am committed to not keep a record of wrongs because love never fails.

Eight times Paul uses the word “not” (i.e., “Love does not”) in I Corinthians 13. Paul spends half of his time and half of his ink telling us what love does not do. If you have the agape love of Christ, you are not rude, not self-seeking, not proud, and not provoked. If you have the agape love of Christ, you don’t keep a record of wrongs. What’s the sign we record sin?

- A. List keepers use absolute language. “You always, you never, I would never, etc...”
- B. List keepers relate based on performance. Loved ones get tired of trying to measure up.
- C. List keepers can’t trust; they protect themselves. The prospect of future hurt paralyzes.
- D. List keepers are hurting individuals who hurt others. Healing only comes from Christ.