

Love Does Not Rejoice in Unrighteousness

I Corinthians 13:6

I Corinthians 13 is a description of the genuine follower of Jesus Christ. Love is the trademark of real Christianity. “Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness” (v. 6). But what does this phrase mean? The word unrighteousness translates the Greek *adikia* (a = **not** + dikê = **right**) and means “a condition of not being right,” whether with God, according to His standards, or with man, according to laws of man or man’s conscience, **to be unjust, unrighteous, bent, or crooked**. But how do we all know what is right?

1. Read and obey the words of Jesus.

These standards are given to us by the lawgiver of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ.

Moses is not our lawgiver; Jesus Christ is our lawgiver. “Hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5).

2. Honor and comply with the laws of man (unless man forces you to violate Jesus’ words).

“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God” (Romans 13:1).

3. Pay attention to the voice of conscience.

These are those occasions when things just don’t “feel” right. Maybe it doesn’t violate any command of our Lord and any law of the land, but it is something that just doesn’t “feel right.”

I. People by nature delight in the doing of what is not right.

“They are filled (saturated, permeated) with all manner of unrighteousness” (Romans 1:29).

Adikia is used 25 times in the New Testament to describe those without Christ. It is translated with words like “evildoers,” “iniquity,” “injustice,” “unrighteousness” or “wickedness.”

II. A Christian does not delight in what is not right.

Believers are not immune to doing works of iniquity (acts of unrighteousness), but it brings no inner, lasting satisfaction. Paul writes believers in Romans 6:13 and tells us to “not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness (*adikia*).”

Rejoice – take delight in; to have inner satisfaction or an outward expression of gladness.

III. It is the delight in doing what is not right that God condemns.

Jesus will say on that great day of wrath: “I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from me all ye evildoers (“workers = ergates” of “iniquity = *adikia*”)” (Luke 13:27).

Paul warned that God would give to those who obey (continuous active participation) unrighteousness (*adikia*), wrath and indignation (Romans 2:8). The new birth changes us.

IV. Delighting in what is right will preclude the following thoughts.

1. I just love bad boys; I love to be around people who live on the edge!

2. Everybody else is doing it! What’s wrong with doing it with them?

3. I am declared righteous by God because of Christ; I can do unrighteous things!

“Let us do evil things that good may come” (Romans 3:8). Their condemnation is just.

4. I don’t have a very good testimony of salvation; I’ve never done anything really wrong.

The more grace in you, the more you’re aware of what others call minor imperfections.