

## Loving Rejoicing in Christ

### 1 Cor. 13:6

Pastor Phil Layton, GCBC, November 7, 2021

This week I watched the story of C.S. Lewis: The Most Reluctant Convert. MOUSE AND CAT ANALOGY GOD CLOSED IN WAKING UP TALK ABOUT – Logic, learning, lust – God’s love he came to understand. That’s the love we’ve been learning about and will look at again in 1 Cor 13

His book *The Four Loves* calls “Divine Gift-love—Love Himself working in a man [that] enables him to love what is not naturally lovable; lepers, criminals, enemies, morons, the sulky, the superior and the sneering.”<sup>1</sup>

This love is patient and kind, it’s not rude, proud, self-seeking, etc. Look at 1 Cor 13:6, love *does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth* ...The conversion of C. S. Lewis had a lot to do with this. He was looking for love in all the wrong places and seeking joy in wrongdoing. But he was surprised to find joy in the truth of God (autobiography *Surprised by Joy*).

- He wrote: ‘Joy is distinct ... from pleasure in general ...’ (chap. 5)
- ‘I sometimes wonder whether all pleasures are not substitutes for Joy... perversions of Joy ...’ [capital J joy, God’s Joy] (chap. 11)
- ‘All the value lay in that of which Joy was the desiring...There was no doubt that Joy was a desire...it was also a kind of love...’ (ch 14)
- 1 Cor 13:6 is about what love finds joy in or what love feels joy in.

**Outline:**

1. True Love and Feelings of Affection
2. The Truth About Misplaced Affections
3. Truths to Grow our Loving Rejoicing

1 Cor 13 is all about true love. v. 1 tells us without love we’re bad loud music. Music does a bad job telling us about love and feelings. I can’t help falling in love (or out?). In songs, it’s a crazy little thing call love, it isn’t controllable or rational. It’s just emotional feelings that come and go. ‘I can’t stop this feeling, Deep inside of me...I’m hooked on a feeling, I’m high on believing.’

#### Feeling = what I feel pleasure from, what makes me feel good

Here’s from some top 40 hits: ‘It must have been love, but it’s over now,’ and ‘I’ve lost that lovin’ feelin’ (whoa oh). A song that hit #1 for 2 weeks had the title ‘I Want to Know What Love is.’ Another #1 for 3 weeks ‘I Think I Love You’ (Partridge Family). A Billboard #1 song in 1976: ‘Love Rollercoaster.’

Those lyrics and that image of a rollercoaster are a commentary on how our world thinks of love. It’s like your stomach falling on a roller coaster. Falling in love has been described as when you feel like you’ll be sick and you like it. Then falling out of love is also feeling sick but you wanna throw up instead.

Our culture influences and indoctrinates us on what love is and what it’s not.

Kevin DeYoung writes: ‘love gets reduced to sentiment, sympathy, and Oprah-fied versions of acceptance and affirmation... Cheap imitations of biblical love ... plunder... traditional Christian vocabulary and employ [“love”] in such a way that everyone from Dolly

Parton to the Dali Lama will nod in agreement. [But love 1 Cor 13 is God's]... wrath appeasing, Christ-centered, church focused, overflowing, inexhaustible love...'2

God's truth in this chapter says love isn't about you, or what makes you feel good. But love does feel joy in God's truth over evil, and it rejoices with others in it. Look at the end of v. 6: love '*rejoices with the truth. It bears all things...*' (i.e., what doesn't feel good from others). End of v. 7 says love *endures all things* (things about others that don't give feelings of pleasure). *Love never ends* (contrast emotions that fail or we feel must be 'over now'). Love chooses to be patient and kind and refuses to stay irritable or resentful.

Love isn't just fondness or fuzzy feelings you can fall in and out of. It's not just that lovin' feeling that can be lost when there's no tenderness anymore in your fingertips. It's not just superficial emotions, but it's also not just sacrificial actions, either. Look at v. 3, I can '*give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love...*' So it's not just giving to others, even giving it all in self-sacrifice, even at great personal cost; you can do all that and not have love like Paul is talking about. That's a decision of the will in v. 3, but love isn't just actions without affections that we feel.

SURVEY: Biblical love doesn't involve or need feelings or emotions.  
40% of you agreed, 20% unsure, 20% disagreed, 20% strongly disagreed

Love DOES involve and need right feelings. v. 4 involves feelings of envy or jealousy that show whether we love or not. v. 5 involves feeling 'I need my own way,' so I insist on it emotionally. v. 5 also says love needs to not feel irritable or not be easily angered – anger is emotional (you feel that if you live with others). Last week we saw love doesn't feel resentful – that's an emotion we feel. Now in v. 6, love rejoices – it feels the emotion of joy in truth, not sin. Love isn't emotionless unfeeling acts like a stoic or Spock.

Joel Beeke wrote: 'Many Christians today believe [the Greek word *agape* means] not a feeling but an act of the will to do good to others at our own expense. But this idea cannot be based on the different words for love in the Greek... Furthermore, an emotionless concept of love leaves us uncertain what to do with our feelings... that drive our choices... 1 Corinthians 13:6 corrects the popular notion that love has nothing to do with feelings. Love has strong feelings against sin and for righteousness... **love rejoices...**'3

What's love got to do with our emotions? Where do we feel joy or find joy?

v. 6 ends with love rejoicing not just *in* something for us, the literal Greek is *rejoices together with the truth*, this is a joy we feel for and with others.

Look back at 12:25, the end of the verse says we're to feel care for others, then v. 26 says we're to feel it as others suffer and feel rejoicing with them.

SCRIPTURE READING IN ROMANS 12: '*weep with* [that's emotional], *rejoice with... in zeal, be fervent in spirit... with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine... Love one another with brotherly affection...*' So genuine love needs feeling affection and fervent zeal. We need more emotion and passion for things of God and people of God, not less. God commands right feelings

In Philippians Paul links ‘*love...affection and compassion*’ (2:1-2 NASB), and he says ‘*It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart... I yearn for you all with...affection... And it is my prayer that your love may abound more...*’ (1:7-9). We need to pray for our hearts and feelings that we would grow in loving affection and compassion more.

**Peter said we’re to add ‘brotherly affection’ to our agape love.**<sup>4</sup>

Piper: it is careless and inaccurate [to say] love is simply what you do, and not what you feel... yes, love is more than feelings; but, *no*, love is not less than feelings... Affections are essential to the Christian life, not optional. It is astonishing to me that so many people try to define true Christianity in terms of decisions, and not affections... We are commanded to feel, not just to think or decide. We are commanded [in the Bible] to experience dozens of emotions,<sup>5</sup> not just to perform acts of willpower... It is true that our hearts are often sluggish. We do not feel the depth or intensity of affections appropriate for God or His cause. It is true that at those times we must, insofar as it lies within us, exert our wills and make decisions that we hope will rekindle our joy. Though joyless love is not our aim (“God loves a cheerful giver!”), nevertheless it is better to do a joyless duty than not to do it, provided there is a spirit of repentance for the deadness of our hearts.<sup>6</sup>

That takes us to our 2<sup>nd</sup> point: **The Truth About Misplaced Affections**

Look again at v. 6, it says love ‘*doesn’t rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.*’ In other words, its enjoyment or affection isn’t in the wrong place or in the wrong that people do. Where do you place your highest love?

SURVEY: agape by definition is always used of godly love in scripture.

50% thought so, but it’s not always. John 3:19 ‘*people loved the darkness [that’s agape love] instead of light because their deeds were evil.*’<sup>7</sup> Sinners love evil with highest agape love, they sacrifice anything for their love, evil. They hate the light of the truth, but unconditionally love and rejoice in evil.

So if you see a survey, say after next week or so, agape ISN’T always godly love in scripture and love DOES involve or need feelings and emotions that are right.

The problem isn’t affections, it’s misplaced affections, it’s loving rejoicing in sin. Don’t feel resentful about evil (v. 5) or joyful in evil (v. 6).

In the end of v. 5 love doesn’t resent or record wrongs *by others to us*, in the start of v. 6 love doesn’t rejoice at wrongs *in others*. We don’t like it when evil is done against us, but we’re tempted to like evil that’s not against us.

Other translations: ‘*Love finds no joy in unrighteousness...*’ Or it’s ‘*not glad about*’, or ‘*doesn’t delight in evil*’, or ‘*takes no pleasure in evil.*’<sup>8</sup> Christian love ‘*rejoices in the truth*,’ but 2 Thess 2 says<sup>9</sup> unbelievers ‘*refused to love the truth...but had pleasure in unrighteousness*’ (same word as 1 Cor 13:6).

Other translations say they ‘*delighted in wickedness*’ or ‘*enjoy[ed] evil.*’<sup>10</sup>

The problem with sin is we misplace affections and delight in sin instead of delighting ourselves in the Lord, and rejoicing in the Lord and His truth.

In Prov 2:14 sinners ‘*delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil*’ (NIV). Love rejoices in the truth of God but Rom 1:25 says sinners ‘*exchanged the truth of God for a lie...*’ and they seek joy in homosexuality and v. 29 mentions *unrighteousness* [same word as 1 Cor 13:6 for what love doesn’t seek joy in],

listen to the list: *'evil; full of envy...arrogant, boastful ...unloving'* – that's the opposite of love in 1 Cor 13 that is not envious or boastful or arrogant, it thinks no evil. Rom 1 ends they *give hearty approval* to the wrongdoers [another way to say affirming loving rejoicing in evil].<sup>11</sup>

The list includes gossip, slander, and malice, that sinners get perverse joy in

**A proverb says gossip is like delicious morsels sinners rejoice in<sup>12</sup>**

But love doesn't rejoice in that, whether or not it's the truth. D.A. Carson writes that v. 6 means love doesn't join or enjoy 'discussions about what is wrong with the churches and institutions we serve... tracking down and pointing out what is wrong; it...rejoice[s] with others at what is right.'<sup>13</sup> Or another writer adds 'love does not focus on the wrongs of others... as much as possible it focuses on the true and the right.'<sup>14</sup> Why do we like to say or hear negative things about others and their wrongdoing? It makes us feel better about ourselves, self-righteousness. End of v. 4, it's envy, arrogance.

When other people fail in a way we haven't, we can sinfully rejoice in that.

Or they fall like we suspected, and it's a proud 'I knew it' or 'I told you so.'

Some rejoice in bringing up past wrongdoing of others to use against them.

Or they enjoy bringing up wrongdoing of a believer who's not in the room.

The slanderous or scandalous inside scoop puts us in the know as important.

In the context, Paul used this same root word in v. 6 for evil back in ch 6 for people happy to bring the church's dirty laundry 'before the *unrighteous*' (adjective form) and pursuing sexual joy outside of marriage (same word in 6:9). Some took pleasure or delight in fulfilling bodily desires (6:13-21). In 13:6 the emphasis is on pleasure in what others do. Today that can include what some read in Romance novels to what others see on internet screens.

Grocery checkout lines are designed to tempt us to rejoice in evil of others.

Movies often show someone get together with someone they're not married to or who's better than who they married, and the plot and music stirs joy.

Or we see revenge taken on a TV show and our heart cheers to see that sin.

Even Disney cartoon movies make you rejoice as kids rebel against parents.

'Disobedient to parents' is part of the list in Rom 1 people heartily approve.

Paul gives a similar list of sins in Ephesians 5:3-5, including 'crude joking' (v. 4). Do you enjoy sinful jokes or get entertained by what should shame?

You can rejoice in evil things said about our Governor, government, Fauci.

You can literally "love" on SM anything that's bad about leaders you think are bad (or that supports your Covid view, even if not sure that link is true). I've seen professing Christians seem to rejoice more in Trump than in truth.

For President Biden I've seen bumper stickers on cars or posts on Facebook or IG that rejoice in saying bad things (or even euphemisms for bad words).

Whoever your political enemy is, don't rejoice in mocking or their failings. Hate evil but love your enemy, and seek to overcome their evil with good.

Proverbs 24:17 *'Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.'* Job could say *'I have [not] rejoiced at the ruin of him who hated me, or exulted when evil overtook him'* (Job 31:29).

**That's the negative, that would be misplaced affection. What's the positive?**

### That takes us to our 3<sup>rd</sup> point: Truths to Grow our Loving Rejoicing

How do we do the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1 Cor 13:6, how do we *rejoice with the truth*?

Phil 4 helps us: '**Rejoice in the Lord** always... *whatever is true, whatever is ...right* [root word from 1 Cor 13:6], *whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute...worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*'<sup>15</sup>

The 1st truth is we can rejoice in the Lord always and what's true. We can choose to dwell on things that are right instead of the wrongdoing of others.

1 Cor 13 says don't be irritable about what's wrong in others, v. 6 be joyful about what's right in them. Rejoice in the truth of God at work in believers.

3 John 3-4: '*I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your **truth**, as indeed you are **walking in the truth**. I have **no greater joy** than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*' Rejoice with church family when the truth is walked in and rejoice with earthly family too (Luke 15).

A 2nd truth is the joy of the Lord is our strength. He helps us rejoice rightly.

Ps 5:4 says to God '*You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil...*' (NIV).

But rejoice in the truth of Zeph 3:17: '*The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will **rejoice** over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His **love**, He will **rejoice over you with singing.***' (NKJV).

His love fuels joy or gladness we *feel*. Ps 90:14 '*Satisfy us in the morning with **your steadfast love**, that we may **rejoice and be glad** all our days.*'

Psalm 51:12 '*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me...*'

Piper: 'confess the sin of joylessness. Acknowledge the culpable coldness of your heart. Don't say that it doesn't matter how you feel. Second, pray earnestly that God would restore the joy of obedience. Third, go ahead and do...your duty in the hope that the doing will rekindle the delight ... This is very different from saying, 'Do your duty because feelings don't count.'"

A 3rd truth is the gospel is key to rejoicing in the truth. We rejoiced in evil before but Jesus redeems evil by dying for all our wrongdoing on the cross for all who believe in Him. He is the truth we rejoice in, He's the way, the truth, and the life and no one gets to the Father but through Him. He never rejoiced in wrongdoing (sin grieved Him) but He rejoiced in the truth His Father revealed to His children (Lk 10:21).

He calls us to rejoice in Him:

- That the names of all His followers are written in heaven (v. 20).
- He's the Shepherd who rejoices when He brings one of His sheep back to the truth, to great rejoicing in heaven (15:5-7, Mt 18:13).
- For the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross (Heb 12:2), and He calls His servants to '*Enter into the joy of your Master*' (Mt 25)
- As He instituted communion in the upper room: *Abide in my love ... These things I have spoken to you, that **my joy** may be in you, and that **your joy** may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*' He spoke "*that they may have **my joy** fulfilled in themselves ... sanctify them **in the truth***"<sup>16</sup>

- **BRIDGE TO COMMUNION**

1 Corinthians 5:7–8 ... *Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.* <sup>8</sup> *Let us therefore **celebrate** the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and **evil**, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and **truth**.*

## Footnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960), 82.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin DeYoung, "Heaven is a World of Love," <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-horrors-of-hell-and-a-heaven-of-love/> (accessed May 29, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> Joel Beeke, "Love's Attributes," *TableTalk* February 2012 (Ligonier, Sanford, FL), 15-17.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Peter 1:7.

<sup>5</sup> Piper notes on the next page joy is commanded and delight (Psalm 37:4), desire (1 Peter 2:2), tenderheartedness (Ephesians 4:32), etc.

<sup>6</sup> Piper, *Desiring God*, 299–301, argues otherwise there is hypocrisy, when we do actions that look like "honor" or love, while our heart is far from God.

<sup>7</sup> NIV.

<sup>8</sup> HCSB, NIV, NCV.

<sup>9</sup> v. 10-12.

<sup>10</sup> NIV, NLT.

<sup>11</sup> These phrases from NASB.

<sup>12</sup> Proverbs 18:8 ESV.

<sup>13</sup> Carson, 63, citing Barrett. Strauch, 76, adds that loving Christians "do not delight in juicy gossip nor do they find satisfaction in hearing about the sordid sins and demise of Christian leaders they don't like. They do not gloat over scandals in a denomination to which they once belonged ... They don't enjoy publicly denouncing or criticizing the failures and errors of other Christians ... A loving heart is saddened by wrongdoing because it destroys people and displeases God."

<sup>14</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 Corinthians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 351–352.

<sup>15</sup> Philippians 4:4, 8 NASB.

<sup>16</sup> Jn 15:9, 11-12, 17:13, 17.