

46-13-11-Practicing the Perspective of Love

love, good, evil, discerning, maturity, childish, childlike

1 Cor 13:6

Spiritual maturity depends on practicing Love's perspective.

INTRODUCTION:

–[In *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis describes a bus-load from Hell visiting Heaven's outskirts. The interactions between these visitors and their former acquaintances, who come down to meet them, clearly show why the two places are divorced. But the contrast really isn't between two locations. It's between two differing attitudes.]

–To apply the Love Chapter, we must discard unloving attitudes and adopt loving ones. This means distinguishing between childishness and childlikeness, so we can “put childish ways behind” us and embrace Love's maturity. 1 Cor 13:6 clarifies this distinction between two viewpoints as opposite as night and day, or as separate as Heaven and Hell: Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

–Practicing the presence of love and the peace of love will bring us the perspective of love. How does Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Who lives inside us, look at life? How does the Holy Spirit, Who makes our bodies His temple, perceive our daily attitudes and activities? Because “God is love” and lives within us, we already have full access to Love's attitudes. But **HOM.idea**. To think as Love does, we must abandon...

I. Our Childish Delight in “evil” Viewpoints

A. If the *Love Chapter* describes God Himself, and we already know He “*does not delight in evil*,” *why is this phrase even needed?*

1. Maybe we don't yet view holiness as we should. [Visitors from Hell in *The Great Divorce* didn't seem so “evil” at the story's beginning.] (Sin may not look so bad, until *seen in the light of the Cross*.)
2. God reminds us in Isa 55:9, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (I believe He says this not to *put us down*, but to *lift us up*. God's will is to raise us from our low ways to walk in His high ways.)

B. The latent fruit “of the knowledge of good and evil” in fallen humanity leads us to make moral evaluations and decisions on our own.

1. By that same fruit, our first parents traded childlike receptivity to God for childish moral independence from God. (It was **deadly!**)
2. Instead of *rising to God's perspective on* “good and evil,” they *fell*

- into *lower attitudes and behaviors*. The *master deceiver* got their “eyes ...opened” to his views. (He’s *still spreading his ideas*, and the human race [still eating that fruit] is *still adopting his views*.)
- C. Left to ourselves, we trivialize “evil.” But God hasn’t left us *on our own*. He says, “*Love does not delight in evil*” (“evil” seen, not from our *low estimation of it*, but from His *high and holy viewpoint!*).
- D. God’s line separating “good and evil,” is *well-defined* in His Word. (*Moral independence* may move His lines or stretch their width to cover more ground, [just as artists thicken their lines at will. But lines in pure math are precise and without width, like those God draws between “good and evil, so that His people can keep themselves on the *right side* of the line.]
1. When evildoers have “evil” done to them, we may feel a *satisfied thrill* at seeing God’s justice. But the Judge Himself says in Ez 33:11, “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” (The God of love, Who “*does not delight in evil*,” tells us in Pro 24:17, “Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.” Why not? Because, Jesus says, “Love your enemies,” and “*Love does not delight in evil*” of any kind.)
 2. Another way we “*delight in evil*” is by trafficking in gossip— Pro 26:22 (CSB), A gossip’s words are like choice food that goes down to one’s innermost being. [Talebearing can wear a pious mask of “*Pray Jane Doe! You won’t believe what I heard she did!*”] (Gossip defiles our “innermost being” *where Christ dwells*. [A cure it might be grabbing the talebearer’s hand, and quickly launching into deep prayer for the victim of the tale!])
 3. The media feeds our attraction to *bad news* with the latest report of “evil” *at home and abroad, criminal and political, institutional and domestic*. This daily dose of “evil” is supposedly *educational*. (But what about novels, movies, sitcoms and soap operas that showcase sexual sin and criminal violence? If they *entertain or bring “delight,”* then who *moved or removed* God’s moral lines of demarcation?... Those *morally independent* from Him!)

TRANS: [3 Monkeys covering eyes, ears and mouth say, “*see, hear, and speak no evil.*” The message fits our calling, but not the image.] We’re not to ignore the “evil” around us, but to see it with God’s eyes, listen with His heart, and respond with His Word. **Spiritual maturity depends on practicing Love’s perspective.** After we discard *childish viewpoints*, we grow mature through...

II. A Childlike Delight in Our Union with Truth

- A. At the outset of our Christian lives, we *rejoice in learning a creed*.
1. God nurtures us with many *doctrinal facts* and *theological truths* to establish us in the faith. (Yet His ultimate intention is **not** for us to make those foundational areas our *static* preoccupation.)
 2. God’s goal for us is to be like Him, especially in His attitude described in v.6. *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth*. (He wants His views on “good and evil” to become our perspective – Heb 5:13-6:2, Anyone who lives on milk, being **still an infant**, is not acquainted with the teaching about **righteousness**. But **solid food is for the mature**, who by constant use have trained themselves **to distinguish good from evil**. Therefore let us leave the **elementary teachings** about Christ and go on to **maturity**, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
 3. Foundational things are forever *very important*, but if we camp out perpetually on “the elementary teachings,” we can easily fall into a legalistic preoccupation with “**law and order**.” (But God wants us to grow into to His perspective, which is **love and order**.)
- B. Maturing in the Christian life is evidenced by a heart that “*rejoices with the truth*.” (This is not talking about *doctrinal truth* but *Truth the Person*, Who told us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”)
1. As we grow spiritually, we become increasingly enthralled with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (His *indwelling presence in us* not only lets us see everything around us through His eyes, but also leads us “to distinguish good from evil.” *from His perspective*.)
 2. **Age has nothing to do with it!** (There’ve been young believers who got to the “solid food” stage of growth in Christ and were *exercising Love’s discernment*, while those who led them to Christ were still making “the elementary teachings” their only focus.)

CONCLUSION:

– **Spiritual maturity depends on practicing Love’s perspective.** If our adult views are shaped by a past childish “delight” in bad attitudes or in “evil” habits, these *must be discarded*. A “*delight in evil*” and the *joy of union with our indwelling Savior* cannot co-exist. “**God is love**,” and He’s forever *drawn the line* dividing these *opposing attitudes*. Let’s each be one who “*rejoices with the truth*” on the right side of the line with Love.