

1Corinthians 13 (13)

In returning to v7—I want to consider the next two descriptions of love together—"love believes all things, hopes all things"—I put these together—for as we shall see—they are closely related—in short—love is far from a cynical and pessimistic spirit...

I. The Text Explained

II. The Text Clarified

III. The Text Applied

I. The Text Explained

1. Here I want to briefly examine the two possible meanings of the words—love believes and hopes all things...
2. If you were to consider the Reformed commentators—you would find—they largely suggest two meanings...
3. [1] Love believes or hopes in what Scripture says—this is a view—held by some of the older commentators...
4. For example—both John Gill and Jonathan Edwards hold it—it short—the object of faith and hope is Scripture...
5. Faith believes everything that Scripture says—and hope—waits or anticipates all that the Scriptures promise...
6. [2] Love believes or hopes the best of others—that is—both belief and hope—have "others" as their objects...
7. That is—love puts the best construction on things—it thinks the best of people—and refuses to be cynical...
8. I suggest this is the meaning of our text—foremost—because the entire description concerns how love acts with others...
9. That is—throughout this section—verses 4-7—Paul describes how love acts as it interacts or relates to others...
10. Thus it would seem strange—that within these 15 descriptions—all but these two refer to our interaction with others...
11. The entirety—of this list—describes love—as it relates to others—and not directly—how it relates to God...
12. Charles Hodge—"It would be contrary to the context to understand the faith and hope spoken of here as referring to the truths and promises of the Gospel..."
13. Martin Luther—"Paul does not here allude to faith in God, but to faith in men. His meaning is: Love is of decidedly trustful disposition. The possessor of it believes and trusts all men, considering them just and upright like himself..."
14. Now—the primary reason why love believes and hopes all things—is that—it treats others as it would be treated...
15. That is—we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves—or—we are to treat others—as we want them to treat us...
16. Edwards—"Men are very ready to think well of their own qualifications; and so they are forward to think the best of their own state. If there by anything in them that resembles grace, they are exceeding apt to think that their state is good; and so they are ready to think well of their own words and deeds, and very backward to think evil of themselves in any of these respects. And the reason is, that they have a great love to themselves. And, therefore, if they loved their neighbor as themselves, love would have the same tendency with respect to them..."
17. Now—I can best explain our text by suggesting—love believes and hopes the best of others—with regards to four things...
18. [a] Profession—by this I mean—love gives people the benefit of the doubt with regards to the Christian profession...

19. Here we have to careful of two extremes—in one hand there are those in our day—who think everyone is a Christian...
20. For some—to ever question another person's profession—is unloving and uncharitable—but this is simply untrue...
21. Yet—what I'm addressing is the opposite extreme—where we are quick to write off people for unbiblical reasons...
22. This is a point we need to hear—simply because someone is different than us—doesn't mean they are not Christian...
23. Furthermore—some question a person's profession—based on whether or not they experience hard times...
24. For example—Job's friends judged him a lost man—simply because of the hard providences that he endured...
25. We can say—they lacked love—in that—they failed to believe or hope all things about Job—though he suffered...
26. This principle can be positively illustrated in the NT letters—and especially Paul's two letters to the Corinthians...
27. 1Cor.1:2—"to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..."
28. Now—if anyone is familiar with the actual contents of First Corinthians—you will know they had serious problems...
29. In fact—in several parts—Paul speaks plainly—and actually challenges whether or not they truly converted...
30. 1Cor.6:9-11—"do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God..."
31. Notice two phrases—[a] do not be deceived—that is—professing Christians who live like this don't go to heaven...
32. Notice [b] but you were washed—that is—if you've been truly converted—you are no longer what you were...
33. Heb.6:9—"but, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner..."
34. This letter was written to Hebrew Christians—who, because of persecution, were tempted to return to Judaism...
35. In order to keep them from this temptation—the writer—enlists some of the strongest warnings found in Scripture...
36. This passage is one of them—if they fell away—it would be impossible to renew them again to repentance...
37. Let me paraphrase the first 8 verses—there are those—who turn back from their profession—to damnation...
38. Now we have to let these verses have their intended purpose—if his words in v9—are to have their intended purpose...
39. V9—"but, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you"—that is—love believes and hopes all things...
40. You see—love also warns—and it's not blind and ignorant—but it believes the best of others—when possible...
41. Perhaps I can put it like this—we sometimes speak of the "judgment of charity"—that is—love believes all things...
42. [b] Motivation—by this I mean—love fails to impute evil motives to people—without additional knowledge...
43. That is—someone says or does something—and you're not sure why—love believes the best until proven otherwise...

44. For example—someone makes a comment—and you begin to wonder—What exactly did they mean by that?...
45. Love refuses to impute evil motive or intent—it believes and hopes all things—it thinks the best of others...
46. Perhaps I could say—love has thick skin—it's able to endure questionable glances, statements, or actions....
47. Prov.18:13—"he who answers a matter before he hears *it*, *it is* folly and shame to him"—that is—to make a judgment without all the facts...
48. Perhaps, another way of putting it would be—love is not SUSPICIOUS of others—it's not doubtful and disbelieving...
49. There are some people—who simply don't believe anybody—regardless what is said—they hear the opposite...
50. Love acts opposite to this—it's easily convinced—that a person thinks and acts from a positive motivation...
51. This principle is reflected in our judicial system—"Innocent until proven guilty"—or—love believes all things...
52. This is what Paul is saying—love gives the benefit of the doubt—it views others as innocent until proven otherwise..
53. [c] Appearance—by His I mean—love refuses to judge a person—merely based upon their outward appearance...
54. This is an important point to make in our day—a day when most people—have multiple piercings and tattoos...
55. Now let me say something very clearly—I am not saying that it makes no difference—how a person looks...
56. The way we dress and carry our outward appearance matters—it's often an expression—of what's true inwardly...
57. Yet—my point here is this—we have to be careful to too be quick—to judge someone based solely on outer appearances...
58. For example—the other day I was at the store—and a young man was behind me in line—who looked rough...
59. He has tattoos from his neck down—had baggy clothing, and earrings—I at first thought—he was a gangster...
60. But then I observed—that he very politely and with respect—allowed a woman to be checked out before him...
61. When she said thank you—he was so polite—very pleasant—respectful, courteous, considerate, and kind...
62. Now—again I'm not saying that love is blind—we have to be wise and prudent—but brethren—it was a lesson...
63. How many times—have you made an assessment of someone—based on appearance—that was totally false...
64. Jas.2:1-4—"my brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, You sit here in a good place, and say to the poor man, You stand there, or, Sit here at my footstool, 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts..."
65. [d] Accusation—by this I mean—love is reluctant to believe—an accusation—against some one—without clear evidence...
66. 1Tim.5:19—"do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses...."
67. In other words—do not believe what anyone says about an elder—unless it can be verified by a third party...

II. The Text Clarified

1. Here—I simply want to reiterate much of I already said—byway of clarification—as what the text does not say...
2. That is—the fact that loves believes and hopes the best of others—does not mean—it lacks all and any discernment...
3. Or—perhaps I can put it this way—love is not opposed to making judgments about people—it isn't undiscerning...
4. [1] Love judges righteously—that is—love judges with a righteous standard—is judges with a right standard...
5. Jn.7:24—"do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment"—these are the concluding words of a larger section...
6. In v20—the unbelieving and unloving Jews—accused Christ of being demon possessed—"you have a demon..."
7. This was their judgment of Christ—they judged Him demon possessed—they did not believe the best about Him...
8. Notice [a] do not judge according to appearance—that is—do not judge based upon what others say or think...
9. Notice [b] judge with righteous judgment—that is—judge with right judgment—with judgment that is right...
10. The only standard which tells us what is right is the law—or the Scriptures—this is the meaning of verses 22-23...
11. The Jews rightly understood that to be circumcised on the Sabbath was right—according to Leviticus 12:3-4...
12. Yet—He healed a man on the Sabbath which they judged wrong—they should have used the same standard to judge that...
13. That is—you judge the matter of circumcision by the law—use the same standard to judge My person and work...
14. Thus—here is the lesson I'm trying to make—love judges—but it judges righteously—as it uses the Scripture...
15. Should we make judgments about a person's profession, appearance, or actions—yes—but with what standard?...
16. Let me put it this way—a person ignorant of Scripture—has no right to make judgments about anything or one...
17. [2] Love judges graciously—that is—it now looks upon everything with new eyes—which sees things differently...
18. 2Cor.5:16—"therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer..."
19. This verse is a contrast of v12—there he speaks about those who—judge people according to appearance and not heart...
20. That is—they judged people based upon mere gift and not grace—they received those—who had great ability...
21. But—something happened to Paul—v15 he died to the old man and ways, v17—he became a new creature in Christ...
22. Thus, v16—"therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh"—from a worldly point of view (NIV)...
23. Thus—the point I'm attempting to make—we must judge—but we must judge with—new or spiritual eyes...
24. Perhaps I can put it like this—love has new eyes—it sees things altogether differently—with a different standard...
25. For example—let me use this example—I hope it's proper—think of a man—converted from a drug rehab...
26. He doesn't have any thing to commend—from a worldly point of view—no education, no looks, no great vocabulary...
27. The world—looks at him as a nobody—but not love—love looks at him with new eyes—with a new standard...

28. Love believes all things—love judges him graciously—it sees him as a trophy of God's—redeeming grace...
29. [3] Love judges cautiously—that is—it is slow in making judgments about people—for fear of judging wrongly...
30. Matt. 7:1—"judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with measure you use, it will be measured back to you..."
31. Love—knows itself—and thus—it thinks the best of others—what lies at the root of judgmentalism—pride...
32. A judgemental person—is a blind person—it's blind to its own faults—and thus it judges others with severity...
33. Edwards—"A forwardness [quickness] to judge and censure others shows a proud disposition, as though the censorious person thought himself free from such faults and blemishes, and therefore felt justified in being busy and bitter in charging others with them, and censuring and condemning them for them..."
34. Edwards—"If men were humbly sensible of their own failings, they would not be very forward [quick] or pleased in judging others, for the censure passed upon others would but rest on themselves..."

III. The Text Applied

1. [1] Behold the beauty of love—happy is that church and home—where people believe the best about others...
2. Here I want to provide a necessary correction to those—like us—who have a strong convictions of the truth...
3. Or—perhaps I can simply say—I myself need to be reminded—of this fact—love believes and hopes all things...
4. The fact that we live in the day we do—where many professing Christians—have forgotten or rejected the old ways...
5. We can become overly critical—or perhaps—sinfully cynical—we can basically—view the glass half empty...
6. For example—we can view all others churches as unfaithful—and we can view any large church as compromising...
7. Now—have many large churches compromised the truth—yes—but—we can not simply assume all have...
8. [2] Behold the balance of love—here I would simply remind you—of what we've seen last week in verse 6...
9. V6—"love does not delight in iniquity but rejoices with truth"—we must forever wed together—v6 and v7...
10. There are some who prefer v6—we feel comfortable with the concepts—love doesn't delight in iniquity but rejoices in truth..."
11. There are others who prefer v7—love believes all things—what I'm here saying is—both of these are equally necessary...
12. Thus—we must labor for this balanced love—that thinks the best of others—and yet—does not delight in iniquity but rejoices with the truth...