

# Love Bears, Believes, Hopes, and Endures.

1 Corinthians. 13:7

**BI: The power of love shines brightest when in the face of resistance and rejection it courageously and tenaciously presses on for the glory of God.**

Want to learn how to have a powerful impact on the world? Learn to love. This past week, eight of us from Calvary Bible Church saw a living demonstration of this truth as we spent a week in Uganda serving beside our missionaries, Shannon and Danielle Hurley. Frankly, the work they are accomplishing there is amazing. The training conferences, the church they have started, the number of people who are being personally discipled and trained, the salvations and baptisms, not to mention the fact that Shannon is working with the Baptist Union of Uganda to completely reform their national structure into a biblical model of ministry.

Do the Hurleys have an important ministry role? Yes. Are they making an impact on that country? Yes. But the really impressive thing about their ministry is their love for the people they serve.

Its hard to imagine functioning as a married couple and family when you have about ten other people living in your home, but they do it all the time. There are young men and women who need to be discipled. There are children who need to be cared for. There are single mothers who need to be rescued, and strangers who need to be served. And they do it all! (Examples).

One of the most difficult aspects of serving people in this way is when the people you sacrifice for respond with indifference, ungratefulness, and even hostility. What do you do then? How do you respond to people like that? This is what Paul is trying to teach us.

In verse seven we learn four more things about love. It “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.”

## **I. Biblical Love Bears All Things:**

1. When Paul says “Love bears all things,” he chooses a word that means “to cover” or “to endure.” What he is teaching us is that true, biblical love has the ability to carry an enormous load. It is not easily crushed when its overtures of love are rejected or go unappreciated.

2. When you think about this in the context of marriage what can we conclude but that the love of many husbands and wives is very fragile people. Sinfully fragile! At the slightest hint of disrespect a husband is provoked to frustration, bitterness and harsh accusations. On the other side, it often takes only a little husbandly insensitivity for a wife to become offended, withdrawn, and quietly hostile. We are such a fragile people! The love that we once claimed would last forever is as thin as a sheet of crystal and just as easily shattered. But for believers, this shouldn't be.

3. Biblical love does not give up easily. It keeps giving whatever the other person needs even when those attempts to give are met with something less than gratitude and appreciation. Love is

tenacious and not easily discouraged. It has the amazing ability to endure all sorts of suffering and frustration for the sake of others and for the gospel.

One day while we were in Uganda, we were taken to see two houses that Shannon had built for a couple of older Moslem women whose husband had died and left them destitute. When I had a chance to talk with Shannon about it, he said, "You know, you would think that in response to being given a brand new home there would be some impulse of gratefulness and appreciation, but the only thing we hear from them is dissatisfaction and greed." Nevertheless, the Hurleys continue to love and serve even in the face of ungratefulness.

4. That's what true biblical love does. It bears all things.

## **II. Love Believes All Things:**

1. In other words, love is not suspicious or cynical. Biblical love is the love of faith. It is favorably disposed toward those who are the objects of love. When someone is accused of wrongdoing, the one who loves will consider him innocent until he is proven guilty. This is just another way of saying, love chooses to trust the one loved, even though he or she may have sinned or failed in the past.

2. One author wrote, "Love is a harbor of trust. When that trust is broken, love's first reaction is to heal and restore" (MacArthur, *1 Corinthians* p. 354). You say, "That's not easy to do." Absolutely! And that's why it's such a powerful thing. When the Spirit of God fills the child of God with the love of God, choices are made that seem unnatural to the carnal mind. We love the way Jesus loved. We love decisively and radically rather than impulsively and superficially.

3. I've seen both sides of this as I have counseled people. I've seen husbands and wives so distrustful and cynical that even when their spouse does everything right it is assumed that it is only to cover up some secret evil. Beloved, that's bondage. That's poison to a marriage and home.

4. On the other hand, I've seen wives who have been sinned against by their husbands and husbands who have been grossly sinned against by their wives, and yet to see them together you would think they were newly-weds! There is an openness and transparency about the way they speak to one another that is enviable. How is that possible? The secret is that they choose to love. They choose to believe the best. They say things like, "My wife has repented of that past sin and I choose to believe her and trust God rather than become suspicious and cynical." Or, "Yes, my husband did sin egregiously in the past, but he has ask for my forgiveness and I have given it. Now I choose to trust him and will continue to do so unless there is real evidence that proves otherwise." This is biblical love.

5. But it's important to point out here that when Paul says love "believes all things" he is speaking in hyperbole. He is intentionally pushing the idea to the extreme. We need to understand, however, that Paul is not saying love believes what is patently untrue. When a person drinks all the time and yet claims that alcohol is not a problem in his life, love is not deceived. Biblical love is bright and intelligent. It is not blind to the truth. Nor is it gullible. When there is sin, love addresses it head on. To do otherwise would not be loving at all. But the problem Paul is addressing is *NOT* that we tend to err on the side of trust, but that we tend to distrust and condemn one another far too quickly, and that is not biblical love.

6. Biblical love is full of faith. It trusts the one loved and sees him or her through the lens of God's sovereign purposes and rule over all the circumstances of their relationship. When we love like this we not only enjoy deeper fellowship and joy in our relationships, but we show the world what our loving God and His gospel are like.

7. So love bears all things and believes all things. Thirdly...

### **III. Love Hopes All Things:**

1. Faith and hope always seem to go together in God's economy. The future orientation of biblical love is always positive. It does not allow itself to fall into despair.

3. Paul loved the church at Corinth. But his love was not blind or superficial. He saw their sin and was willing to confront it head on because he loved them. And his love for them clung to a positive future orientation. He believed and hoped that they would repent and be restored in their relationship with God and with one another. He was confident that they would eventually respond in a manner worthy of the Lord.

4. He wrote (2 Cor. 7:4) "I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy." (2 Cor. 7:16) "I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you." You see, biblical love is not pessimistic. It's hope is not in the sinful character of people, but in the holy and sovereign character of God! It looks at other people through the lens of Phil. 1:6, "I am confident of this that He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ."

5. The reason believers can love the most unlovable people is because of our confidence in God. We believe that as long as that person is alive, there is hope for them. God is not constrained by anyone's sin. He has the capacity to break through the most hardened and stubborn hearts and bring about radical and undeniable repentance.

We've seen this many times at Calvary Bible Church. Some of the sweetest, most godly people in our congregation are those who once were ensnared in the most horrific of sins. "But God..." right? "But God who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even

when were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4).

6. Love hopes all things. When faith in a loved one is shattered, love still hopes. “As long as God’s grace is operative, human failure is never final” (Ibid, p. 354). Whether it is a rebellious child who rejects God, or an unbelieving spouse, or a Christ-belittling parent, love still hopes and prays that God’s grace will break through and bring about the miraculous change that every child of God has experienced.

7. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and finally...

#### **IV. Love Endures All Things:**

1. The word for “endure” here “was a military term used of an army holding a vital position at all costs. Every hardship and every suffering was to be endured in order to hold fast” (Ibid, p. 355).

2. This last characteristic is similar to the first. Love bears all things and endures all things. Once again, Paul is trying to teach us that biblical love is strong and tenacious. Alexander Strauch says, “Love lasts; it holds out; it perseveres in the face of opposition, unkindness, and difficulties; it never gives up” (*Leading With Love*, p. 83)

3. A great example of this is Moses. How many times did Moses have to endure the grumbling of the people that he was trying to lead. Time after time they sought to condemn him, reject him, and even replace him. But even when God Himself said that he was ready to wipe out these people and start all over, Moses is found praying and pleading with God that He would be gracious and not give them what they deserve. And this happened not just once, but on four different occasions.

4. “Moses probably could have thought of a hundred reasons not to pray for them, but as a man of God he was able to rise above personal feelings and pray for their forgiveness and deliverance” (Straugh, p. 85).

5. Do you see now why love is the secret to having a powerful influence on the world around you? This is not common. This is not normal or natural. In fact, there is no explanation for this kind of love! It is born *NOT* of the flesh but of the Spirit. It is a product of being made a new creature in Christ. It is a capacity that can only be acquired through the miracle of New Birth. But if you are, indeed, born again, then you have the capacity to love like this.

6. Moreover, if you are a child of God, you have a mandate to learn how to love like this. It’s wonderful to know what your spiritual gift is. It’s great to know theology and biblical doctrine. But the thing God wants you to master more than any of that is how to love people the way God loves people.

7. The love of selfish people is like a snowflake on an August afternoon in Texas. As soon as things heat up it melts away. True, biblical love, however, is like a diamond. It is forged in the heat and pressure of God's holiness and grace so it has the capacity to endure a great amount of suffering for the good of others and the glory of God.

8. So now its time to ask a penetrating question. Are you a loving person? Are the people closest to you the beneficiaries of you forbearing, faithful, hopeful, enduring love? Or is your love for people a superficial, snowflake kind of love?

9. Who has God called you to love this week? That is the person God plans to influence most by your life. And they will be influenced by you to the degree that you choose to give them whatever you have that they need simply because God wants you to.

10. Don't allow yourself to become discouraged in your ministry of love to others. Remember this...

**BI: The power of love shines brightest when in the face of resistance and rejection it courageously and tenaciously presses on for the glory of God and the good of the person loved.**