

The Greatest Gift: LOVE's Description PT 4

1 Corinthians 13:7-8

Pastor Jason Dennett's notes

NKJV - "Love...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails."

NLT - "Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance... But love will last forever!"

AMP - "Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]."

Introduction:

- In the US Military, you quickly learn "**It's all a test**"....
 - For followers of Jesus Christ, Love is the **ULTIMATE Test** we face! (Mt 22:37)
 - Today, we will be taking a **5 question test**....on Agape Love!
 - I. **How STRONG is my Love:** Does It Bear All Things?
 - II. **How TRUSTING is my Love:** Does It Believe All Things?
 - III. **How HOPEFUL is my Love:** Does It Hope All Things?
 - IV. **How COMMITTED is my Love:** Does It Endure All Things?
 - V. **How LASTING is my Love:** Does It Never Fails?
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- I. **How STRONG is my Love:** Does It Bear All Things?
 - This is the Greek word "**στρέγω**" or "**stegō**" meaning "to never give up, to bear up under anything and everything that comes."
 - The Corinthians were NOT loving properly:
 - Corinthian **Competition**... chap. 1
 - Corinthian **Litigation**... chap. 6
 - Corinthian **Separation**...chap. 7
 - We can measure our spiritual maturity by our REACTION to others'
ACTIONS.
 - Is **MY Love Forbearing with people? Does it "carry" on and "carry" through?**

Gal 6:2 - "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

A 2015 documentary, "The Drop Box," tells the story of Pastor Lee Jong-Rak, who founded South Korea's first "Drop Box" for abandoned newborn babies. The film tells how Lee, once an ill-tempered, skirt-chasing drunk, was transformed by a loving heavenly Father to love his own child and other newborns and sick infants he discovers in his box. His own son, 29-year-old Eun-man, is the inspiration behind Lee's ministry. He is bedridden, brain-damaged, and totally dependent. Pastor Lee is a great example to all believers, to have compassion and care for individuals who are helpless by themselves.

CS Lewis in "Mere Christianity": "Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him."

- True Agape Love can **CARRY** things; it can **BEAR UP** under a burden:
Jn 19:17 - "...He, bearing His cross, went out to ...Golgotha.."
1 Pet 5:7 - "...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

II. How **TRUSTING** is my Love: Does It Believe All Things?

- This is the Greek word "**πιστεύω**" or "**pisteuō**" meaning "to trust into someone, to not lose faith, to to be ever ready to believe the best of every person."
- True Agape Love isn't quick to be cynical, scornful, to believe the worst about people.
 - "**Innocent** until proven Guilty!"
 - **Optimists Live Longer than Pessimists:** A 2009 study suggested that optimists live longer than pessimists do. The study of almost 100,000 women found that optimists (people who expected that good things would happen) were 30% less likely to die of heart disease while the study was taking place, than pessimists. In addition, trusting women were 23% less like to die of cancer than the "cynically hostile."
- This is how **JESUS** looked at people - He saw the best, believed the best!
 - Gideon - "**Hero**"
 - Peter - "**Rocky**"
 - Saul - "**Small**"
- There are some who believe the **WORST** about others:

- Job's "counselors"
- Pharisees - Jn 8
- Hatred believes the **WORST**, but Agape believes the **BEST!**
- Hopeful does **NOT** mean "careless" or "unbiblical" love:
 - Sin must be **repented** of... Titus 2:11
 - Sin must be **corrected**... Eze 18:20
 - Sin carries a **high price**... Rom 6:23
 - Agape Love is **HOPEFUL** that they will repent, embrace correction, and walk rightly with Jesus once again... though things may never be the same as before!
- What would it take for someone to **TURN** you from your loved ones? Your Spouse? Your Kids? Your GOD? (**Any Evidence?!?**)

III. How **HOPEFUL** is my Love: Does It Hope All Things?

- This is the Greek word "**ἐλπίζω**" or "**elpizō**" meaning "to have an absolute expectation of coming good, to hopes without fading under all circumstances."
- Even when trust is shaken, because of **HOPE** you can hold out for them!

Haiti Earthquake Survivor Hoped He Would Be Found: The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck the island of Haiti in January 2010 destroyed buildings and killed or maimed tens of thousands of people. As hope for victims began to fade, the discovery of a survivor in the wreckage of a hotel grocery store renewed the resolve of many. Rescuers pulled **Wismond Exantus from the rubble 11 days after the earthquake. Exantus told reporters from his hospital bed that the first thing he wanted to do was find a church to give thanks to the Lord. He said he spent the time praying, reciting psalms, and sleeping. He summed up his experience saying, "I wasn't afraid because I knew they were searching and would come for me."**
- As long as **GOD'S GRACE** is in operation, failure is never final!

Humanity - Failure & Forgiveness predicted!
Israel - Failure & Forgiveness predicted!
Peter - Failure & Forgiveness predicted!
YOU?!?

IV. How **COMMITTED** is my Love: Does It Endure All Things?

- The Greek word used here is "**ὑπομένω**" or "**hypomenō**", the verb form "**hupomone**" for "patience"...

This is a military word for "Siege Warfare" when an army would

DIG IN for years and besiege a city, starving them, crushing their spirits. Paul is saying that Agape Love will "**hunker down**" and will "**stay the course**"; it will "**dig in**" for the long haul in relationships, like a general that is committed to the fight until he conquers the city!

Japanese Soldier Continues Fighting: Hiroo Onoda was a lieutenant in the Japanese army stationed on the Philippine island of Lubang during World War II. When his commander left the island, he ordered Onoda to stay and fight. "It may take three years, it may take five, but whatever happens we'll come back for you," he had said. Onoda faithfully carried out those orders for the next 29 years. After the war, the Japanese government dropped leaflets to persuade him to come out of hiding but he dismissed them as Allied propaganda. He was even declared dead in 1959. In 1974 he encountered Norio Suzuki, a Japanese student who had gone in search of Onoda. Suzuki could not convince Onoda—who insisted he was still awaiting orders—to come out of hiding. Suzuki left but soon returned with a delegation that included Onoda's brother and his former commander, who formally relieved the emaciated soldier of duty.

- **Enduring Love In Marriages...??**

The Vows...do they really understand??

Commitment a Cause of Love: Daniel Gilbert, a Harvard psychologist, studies happiness. One thing he discovered is that married people are happier than those who just live together. He uses himself as an example. He and his girlfriend had been living together for a dozen years. Because of his discovery, he proposed marriage. How did it work out? "I love my wife more than I loved my girlfriend, even though she's the same person. **Commitment isn't just a sign of love; it is a cause of love.**"

- **Enduring Love In Churches...??**

This isn't the age of "enduring love" in churches...

*People engage in "**church shopping**" and "**church hopping**".*

V. How **LASTING** is my Love: Does It Never Fail?

- This is the Greek word "**ἐκπίπτω**" or "**ekpiptō**" meaning "to fall out of, to fall down from, to fall off, to perish, to fall powerless, be without effect."
- Here Paul ties it all together...moves from TIME into **ETERNITY!**

- ***GOD is eternal***, His love is eternal, and so it will ***never PASS AWAY!!***
- Love has ***STAYING POWER***....it's a ***PERMANENT DECISION***...not a "feeling"
- On the "***Love Train***", ***CHOICE*** is the "caboose", and feelings are the "rail cars"

Enduring Love: Lizzie Velasquez is one of three people in the world who suffer from a rare genetic disorder that ***prevents a person from gaining weight***. She has never weighed more than 62 pounds, and she was born blind in her right eye. To make matters worse, right before her junior year of high school, Velasquez discovered a video of herself online labeled "***The World's Ugliest Woman***." The video had four million hits, and even though Velasquez's parents tried to get it taken down, the anonymous person who had posted it refused. Rather than turn to misery and self-pity, Velasquez faced the matter head on. She had already talked to high school students about her condition, so she began to speak every time the opportunity arose. She quickly had a worldwide stage and even wrote three books, including one entitled *Be Beautiful, Be You*. Velasquez is now a graduate of Texas State University and says her faith has helped her endure during the difficult times. She said, "It's been my rock through everything, just having the time to be alone and pray and talk to God and know that He is there for me."