

Jason Smith – For Better or Worse

Part 2: Love Is More Than a Feeling

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love isn't just an emotion—it's an action, a choice, and a commitment. Biblical love requires patience, kindness, humility, and forgiveness, even when it's hard.

This week, examine how you express love in your marriage. Are your actions reflecting the selfless, sacrificial love that the Bible calls us to? Commit to loving your spouse in a way that reflects God's love for you—actively, unconditionally, and consistently.

Introduction:

When we hear the word "love," most of us think of romance: candlelit dinners, roses, and long walks on the beach.

Hollywood tells us that love is something we feel—a spark, a flutter in the stomach, a chemical reaction.

But anyone who's been married for more than five minutes knows the truth: love is far more than a feeling.

Feelings fade. There will be days when the spark is gone, when the butterflies disappear, and when your spouse doesn't look as charming as they did on your wedding day.

On those days, love becomes a choice. You choose to love, even when you don't feel like it. You choose to be kind when you're

frustrated, to forgive when you've been wronged, and to serve when you're tired.

The Bible gives us a clear picture of this kind of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It's patient and kind. It doesn't envy, boast, or keep a record of wrongs.

This is the kind of love God calls us to in marriage—not just an emotional response but an intentional way of living.

Today, we're going to unpack what it means to love like this in the ups and downs of marriage.

1. **Love Requires Patience and Kindness**

1 Corinthians 13:4

“Love is patient, love is kind.” These are the very first descriptions of love that Paul gives us, and for good reason. Patience and kindness are the foundation of a strong marriage.

Movie – **(SHOW PIC)** Father of the Bride (1991). Steve Martin is so stressed during the planning of his daughter's wedding.

We often think of patience as something passive—like waiting at the DMV. But **biblical patience is powerful**. It's **love under pressure**. It's the kind of patience Jesus shows us daily.

When Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 that *"love is patient,"* he isn't talking about being calm in traffic—he's talking about being **slow to anger with people** who test you. He's saying: *If it's real love, it won't quit on people easily.*

Then in Galatians 5:22, Paul reminds us that this kind of patience isn't natural—it's **fruit**. It grows in us when we walk with the Holy Spirit. It's not about willpower; it's about **Spirit-empowered love**.

This is why God MUST be your ONE.

Patience isn't weakness; it's love wearing armor.

Think about patience for a moment. It means slowing down, listening, and giving your spouse grace when they make mistakes.

It means understanding that they're a work in progress—just like you. Kindness goes hand-in-hand with patience.

It's not just about being nice; it's about actively choosing to bless your spouse with your words and actions.

For example, when your spouse snaps at you after a long day, respond with kindness instead of retaliation.

Application:

- When you feel impatient with your spouse this week, pause and ask God for help to respond with grace instead of frustration.
- Look for one intentional act of kindness you can do for your spouse each day, whether it's making their favorite coffee, giving a compliment, or simply being fully present.

Conclusion:

Patience and kindness are the building blocks of love.

When you practice them in your marriage, you create a safe space for your relationship to thrive, even in difficult moments.

2. Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

1 Corinthians 13:5

Paul also writes, **“Love... keeps no record of wrongs.”** Let's be honest: this one is tough.

The movie *The Breakup*. The Lemon Scene. **(SHOW PIC)**

She asks Gary (Vince Vaughn) to help with the dishes.

He refuses because he already “helped.”

She explains she doesn't want help — she wants a partner.

This scene shows her frustration that he does only the bare minimum and doesn't anticipate her needs.

Now, let me establish something really quick. There is a difference between complaining and communicating.

Communication is seeking understanding and resolution.

In other words, it's focused on solving the problem and expressed calmly and respectfully.

Well, the way I was brought up, we hollered when we needed something communicated; the way you were brought up will lead you to a divorce.

It will take ownership and will be open to listening and compromise.

Communication has a goal; it desires to bring growth, clarity, and connection.

Communication invites partnership.

Complaining is expressing frustration without aiming for resolution.

Complaining focuses on venting or criticizing, is repetitive, blames others, shows little interest in listening, and offers no clear solution.

Write this down:

Complaining releases emotion

Communication builds connection

So, what's the core difference?

Complaining says I'm irritated

Communication says let's fix this

It's so easy to hold onto the ways our spouse has hurt or disappointed us. But love requires forgiveness—a willingness to let go of past offenses and move forward.

Imagine what your marriage would look like if you stopped keeping score.

What if you stopped bringing up that argument from two years ago or comparing your spouse's flaws to their past mistakes?

Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting; it means choosing to release the offense and trust God to bring healing.

Think of God's forgiveness toward us—He doesn't hold our sins over our heads. In the same way, we're called to forgive our spouse and extend the same grace we've been given.

Application:

- If there's a past hurt you've been holding onto, pray about releasing it this week. Write it down, ask God for healing, and commit to letting it go.
- Practice forgiveness daily by choosing not to bring up old arguments or mistakes when conflict arises.

Conclusion:

Forgiveness is one of the greatest gifts you can give your spouse. When you let go of the past, you open the door to a future filled with healing and restoration.

3. Love Always Protects, Trusts, Hopes, and Perseveres

1 Corinthians 13:7

Paul concludes his description of love by saying that it **"always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."**

These qualities remind us that love isn't passive—it's active, resilient, and fiercely loyal.

To protect your marriage means to guard it against anything that could harm it—pride, selfishness, or even outside influences.

Trust means believing the best about your spouse, even when it's easier to assume the worst.

Hope means expecting God to work in your marriage, even when things feel broken.

Perseverance means sticking with your spouse through every trial, choosing to fight for your marriage instead of giving up.

Application:

- Identify one way you can protect your marriage this week, whether that's setting healthy boundaries, addressing an area of conflict, or seeking God together in prayer.
- Choose to trust in your spouse's intentions, even when conflict arises. Ask God to help you see them through His eyes.

Conclusion:

Love that protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres is a love that can weather any storm. When you choose to embody these qualities, you reflect the strength and resilience of God's love in your marriage.

Love isn't just an emotion—it's a choice. It's choosing patience over frustration, forgiveness over bitterness, and perseverance over giving up.

This kind of love doesn't happen by accident; it takes intentionality, prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we close today, think about the ways you've been loving your spouse. Are your actions reflecting the love described in 1 Corinthians 13?

If not, don't be discouraged—God's grace is sufficient to help you grow. Ask Him to fill your heart with His love so that you can pour it out in your marriage.

This week, commit to loving your spouse intentionally. Choose one aspect of 1 Corinthians 13—patience, kindness, forgiveness, or perseverance—and put it into practice daily.

Pray together as a couple, asking God to strengthen your love for one another. Remember, love isn't just a feeling—it's a reflection of God's love working through you.