

## Jason Smith – For Better or Worse

### Part 3: Love That Endures

**Scripture Reference:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

True love is not based on fleeting emotions but on actions rooted in patience, kindness, and selflessness. When we align our love with God's definition, we build marriages that can endure life's storms.

Love isn't about how we feel; it's about how we choose to act. This week, examine whether your love reflects God's enduring love.

Commit to loving your spouse with patience, kindness, and perseverance, even when it's difficult.

**<sup>4</sup> Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.**

**<sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.**

### Introduction:

Imagine standing in line at the grocery store, and the cashier asks, "Paper or plastic?" **(SHOW PIC)** It's a simple question, right?

But what if we applied that same idea to love? Is your love durable like paper, or does it stretch and bend like plastic?

In today's culture, love is often treated as fragile—paper thin, easily torn when life gets messy. We fall in and out of love based on how we feel.

But God's love isn't like that, and neither should the love in our marriages be. God's love endures.

It holds up under pressure, stretches in seasons of stress, and remains steadfast in every situation.

### **A. Biblical Love Is a Command, Not Just an Emotion**

God commands love:

- "Love the Lord your God..." (Deuteronomy 6:5)
- "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18)
- "Love your enemies." (Matthew 5:44)
- Husbands Love you Wife.

You cannot be commanded to feel something on demand—but you can be commanded to act, choose, and commit. This shows that biblical love is primarily an act of obedience and will.

### **B. The Heart (Emotions) Is Unreliable**

Scripture warns that human feelings are unstable:

- **"The heart is deceitful above all things."** (Jeremiah 17:9)
- Emotions fluctuate with circumstances, moods, and personal desires.

If love is based only on feelings, it will fade when:

- Conflict arises
- Attraction changes
- Trials come
- Someone disappoints us

**Biblical love is designed to endure beyond emotional highs.**

## C. **God's Love Is Covenant-Based, Not Mood-Based**

God's love for His people is not driven by emotional reaction:

- **"I have loved you with an everlasting love."** (Jeremiah 31:3)
- Romans 5:8 — God loved us while we were still sinners

God did not love us because we were lovable or because He "felt" pleased with us. His love flows from His character and covenant faithfulness, not emotional impulse.

Remember week 1, marriage is a covenant, not a contract.

We are called to love in the same way (Ephesians 5:1–2).

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Paul describes love in action. You've probably heard this passage at weddings, but it's not just a poetic ideal. It's a blueprint for enduring love.

Important Clarification

The Bible does not say feelings are bad.  
God created emotions.

But Scripture teaches:

- Feelings are part of love
- They are not the foundation of love
- The foundation is truth, covenant, and obedience

As we dive into these verses today, we'll explore how love rooted in God's Word can help us navigate the ups and downs of marriage.

### 1. **Love Is Patient and Kind**

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:4

**"Love is patient, love is kind..."** (1 Corinthians 13:4).

These words sound beautiful, but have you ever thought about how hard it is to live them out?

Patience and kindness are often tested in the smallest, most ordinary moments—when your spouse forgets to take out the trash, or when they're running late (again).

Remember from last week's message: arguments and attacks build walls between; patience and Kindness build walls around.

Patience means choosing to be calm when you feel like snapping. Kindness means extending grace when frustration feels easier.

These qualities are the foundation of enduring love because they create a safe, trusting environment.

When we're patient and kind, we reflect God's love to our spouse, even in their imperfections.

Paul, when speaks that love is patient and kind, he is teaching us:

The Greek word he uses is μακροθυμεῖ (**makrothyme**).

- Makro = long
- Thymos = temper / passion / anger

It literally means “long-tempered” — slow to anger. Not short-fused, but long-fused.

What does that teach us?

Patience in love means:

- I endure without exploding.
- I give people room to grow.
- I absorb irritation without retaliation.

God Himself is described this way. In Exodus 34:6, the Lord declares He is “slow to anger.”

Imagine a gardener planting a seed. He does not shout at the soil because it hasn't sprouted in 24 hours. He waters. He waits. He trusts the process.

Love understands growth takes time.

Psychologically speaking, patience creates emotional safety.

When someone knows you won't erupt at their weakness, they can heal and mature.

Christ does this with us every day.

### **Application:**

- This week, when you feel your patience being tested, pause and ask God to help you respond with calm and kindness.
- Look for one specific way to show kindness to your spouse, whether it's through a kind word, a thoughtful note, or an unexpected act of service.

**Patience and kindness are small choices that make a big difference. They soften hearts, strengthen bonds, and remind us that love is not about being right but about being present.**

## **2. Love Does Not Keep Score**

1 Corinthians 13:5

Paul writes, **"It [love] does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs"**

(1 Corinthians 13:5). But let's be honest—keeping score is one of the easiest traps to fall into in marriage.

"I did the dishes last night, so you should do them tonight."

"You forgot my birthday last year, so why should I go out of my way for you now?"

**When we keep score, we're not loving selflessly; we're keeping track of what's "fair." But God's love isn't fair—it's generous, forgiving, and unconditional.**

Love that endures lets go of grudges and keeps no record of wrongs. It chooses forgiveness over resentment, even when forgiveness feels undeserved.

**“Love... does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.”** (1 Corinthians 13:5, ESV)

The word translated “resentful” in the ESV is from the Greek:

λογίζεται (logizetai)

It’s an accounting term. It means:

- To calculate
- To reckon
- To keep a ledger
- To keep score

Paul is literally saying:

Love does not sit down and calculate the evil done to it.

It does not maintain a spreadsheet of offenses.

### **A. Keeping Score Turns Love Into a Business Transaction**

If I say, “You hurt me twice, so now I owe you coldness,” I’m no longer loving — I’m trading.

But love is not a contract. It’s a covenant.

God does not love us like a banker tracking spiritual debts. If He did, we would be spiritually bankrupt. Psalm 130:3 says:

**“If You, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”**

The implied answer? No one.

## **B. Keeping Score Poisons the Heart**

Psychologically, resentment is rehearsed anger. The more you replay it, the stronger it becomes.

When you keep score:

- You rehearse the wound.
- You strengthen the bitterness.
- You harden your heart.

Hebrews 12:15 warns about a “root of bitterness” that grows and defiles many.

## **Bitterness is what happens when love stops forgiving**

### **C. Love Reflects the Gospel**

Here’s the beautiful truth:

God does keep records — but for judgment. Yet for those in Christ, those records are canceled.

Colossians 2:14 says **He canceled “the record of debt” that stood against us.**

Do you see it? The same accounting language.

God took the ledger of our sins and nailed it to the cross.

If God erased our eternal record, how can we justify keeping temporary ones?

### **Application:**

- If there’s a hurt or resentment you’ve been holding onto, ask God to help you release it this week. Have an honest, grace-filled conversation with your spouse if necessary.
- Practice selfless love by doing something for your spouse without expecting anything in return.

When we let go of the scorecard, we make room for grace. Forgiveness isn't always easy, but it's a gift that frees both you and your spouse to move forward in love.

### **3. Love Always Perseveres**

1 Corinthians 13:7

Paul ends his description of love by saying, “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:7).

**Perseverance is about sticking it out, even when the feelings fade and the challenges seem overwhelming.**

Think about the vows many of us made on our wedding day: “for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health.”

Perseverance means keeping those vows, not just when life is easy but especially when it's hard.

When we persevere in love, we show our spouse that they are worth fighting for.

#### **Application:**

- Reflect on how you've handled challenges in your marriage. Have you leaned into God's strength, or have you been tempted to give up?
- Commit to persevering through a specific challenge in your marriage this week. Pray together and ask God to strengthen your bond.

**Perseverance isn't about ignoring the difficulties in your marriage; it's about choosing to face them together.**

With God's help, your love can endure any trial.

#### **Conclusion:**

Love that endures isn't built on feelings; it's built on faithfulness. It's patient and kind, it forgives and lets go of resentment, and it perseveres through every challenge.

This kind of love doesn't come naturally to us, but it's the love God has poured out on us through Jesus.

As you think about your marriage, ask yourself: Is my love aligned with God's love? Where can I be more patient?

Where do I need to let go of a grudge? Where can I persevere when things feel hard?

The good news is that we don't have to do this on our own. God's love equips us to love our spouse the way He loves us—faithfully, generously, and unconditionally.

### **Call to Action:**

This week, let 1 Corinthians 13 be your guide. Choose one of the qualities of love—patience, kindness, forgiveness, or perseverance—and focus on living it out in your marriage.

Ask God to help you love your spouse in a way that reflects His perfect love. And remember enduring love isn't easy, but with God at the center, it's always possible.