

1 Corinthians 13:6-7 7 Things Love Does

A sermon delivered at Calvary Chapel DC Metro
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We've been learning a lot about love lately as we study our way through 1 Corinthians 13. Probably the first thing we would have to say is that the love we find described in the Bible is a different kind of love than the love you find at Hallmark or in the popular media.

We're learning that Biblical love doesn't take the easy way out, it doesn't just focus on it's own affinities, the things it likes, or what comes easy and yet, this is what we MUST become like.

Fortunately, as we've said so often - never forget, this isn't something we can do on our own - we don't just muscle our way, or feel our way into this. If we want this kind of love to flow out of our lives, it must first be flowing in. We have to experience this love that God has for us, and then actively try to show it to others.

Let's read about it and then we can talk some more.

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

So, in this chapter we find love catalogued. We see eight things it does not do – we covered those last week and in the weeks before. This morning, we’re going to cover the positive side and see seven things love does, seven things that ought to be increasingly present in your life if you are a Christian.

We met the first two a few weeks ago, and if you weren’t here, you really need to go to iTunes or to the website and download that message on verse four where we talked about the surprising fact that the very first thing we read about love is that it suffers long, or some of your versions may say, love is patient. That’s the *first thing* God has to tell us about love – and then, to make sure we really get the point, the last thing we see here in our list is that love endures all things.

Don’t let that just roll on by you – stop and chew on it. Meditate on that. Write it on your refrigerator or on a yellow sticky and really think about it. Love suffers long; love endures. Is that what you think of when you think of love? That’s why I’m saying; this is not the ordinary love most people think of.

So, if you’re taking notes this morning, give yourself space for seven points as we talk about what love is. I’ll give them all to you now and then we’ll dig into the last five since we’ve already covered the first two.

1. Love suffers long
2. Love is kind
3. Love rejoices in the truth
4. Love bears all things
5. Love believes all things
6. Love hopes all things
7. Love endures all things

3. Love rejoices in the truth

We find this in verse 6 where we also see that’s paired with a negative, so we saw last week, **6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.**

In light of this, can I ask: what’s the source of your joy? What makes you happy? What do you rejoice about? And, in light of that, what makes you happy about another person – what makes you like them or approve of them?

What do you find attractive about another person? When you look at them physically in terms of beauty or desirability, to put in plain terms – what do you think makes someone hot? When you think about what makes you want to be in a relationship with another person romantically – would the things that attract you to the other person be classified as iniquity, as sinful, as worldly or as truthful and godly? That’s not to say you shouldn’t be attracted to someone. You should. But is it in a pure way or a lustful way? Are you rejoicing in the glimpses of God you see in them, or are you excited by their attitude or appearance?

We could ask the same question when it comes to affinity – what kind of person do you admire or applaud? Do you admire rebelliousness, arrogant pride, or a tough-guy persona or attitude?

I love to watch Premier League soccer with my boys, we watch more soccer in our house than football. Or, perhaps I could say we watch more futbol than football. And the two biggest names in soccer right now are Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, if you caught any of the World Cup you probably heard their names. They're both phenomenal athletes with freakish skills and ability.

But there is a world of difference in how they carry themselves. Ronaldo presents himself as a prima donna – a pretty boy that deserves that limelight. When he scores a goal he smirks or struts for all to see. Messi on the other hand just quietly gets back to the game. He doesn't make a big deal of himself and yet, you could get people arguing for hours about which of them is the best player *in the world!*

But let me ask you a question – when someone scores a goal, in any sport, and then goes on to showboat like they just found a cure to cancer, what do you think God thinks of that display? What does God think of the wide receiver that catches a pass and then dodges four or five defenders on his way into the goal and then stands there in the endzone posturing and proud?

What does God think of that? So what about us, how do we respond? Do we rejoice in the behavior and imitate it? Do we encourage others to imitate it? We can rejoice in the goal that is scored without crossing the line and also approving the attitude and outlook of the one who scored it. There's a difference between being excited and being arrogant, isn't there?

Love does not rejoice iniquity (and that includes boasting, pride, arrogance about any kind of performance – financial, athletic, academic, professional), but rejoices in the truth – in that which reflects godliness, in that which you could imagine Christ doing if He were here among us physically. That's a sobering call that needs to be heard in every area of our lives. It means we need to seriously consider what find joy in and what we approve of.

4. Love bears all things. Or, love can put up with anything

The word bear here has two perspectives – to cover and to protect by covering – in that sense it's kind of like a roof on your house. It covers what is inside and protects from what is outside.

We hear the idea of covering again over in 1 Peter 1:8 where we are told that “[love covers over a multitude of sin.](#)” Or, as we might say, love is blind. We ask the question, “What does she see in him?” That can be for good, or for bad. She can be looking past a bunch of stuff that she really ought to see, or she can be looking past a bunch of stuff because of something she sees that everyone else cannot. She might be looking past the bad because she sees something good.

Think about yourself – there are things you like about yourself, but you also know about all your imperfections as well, don't you? Physical imperfections, moral imperfections, mental and emotional imperfections; none of us is exactly who or what we hope to be. There are parts of our lives and bodies that we want to be covered. And often we do cover ourselves; we have our excuses or explanations for why things are the way they are at the same time as we hope for what we will be.

The question is: do we look at other people that way? Remember, the commandment is that we would love our neighbor *as ourselves*. So, are you willing to cover over their sins and imperfections in the same way you cover over yours? Or, are you the little blanket hog who keeps stealing all the covers for your side and leaving others exposed? Biblical love doesn't just share the blanket; it's willing to go without it if the other person needs it more. Think about that.

To 'bear' also means to protect, often by supporting or carrying weight. And so, we think of a load bearing wall, or a load-bearing vest – both of which spread the load to make it more bearable.

That which is doing the bearing is protecting the bearer from the effects of other things. And therefore, it needs to be robust.

We're thinking of remodeling our kitchen, we've been toying with the idea for years. When people come over and we talk with them about it, one of the questions they always ask is: well, where are your load bearing walls? Because everyone knows you can't just go knocking down a load-bearing wall whenever you want, it's a major process.

And, with a load-bearing vest – it's usually made of heavy-duty material and there's a lot of stitching that goes into the seams so it can really hold up.

The point is: bearing a load isn't easy. It isn't trivial. And at times, bearing all things will feel like you're the load-bearing wall holding the weight of the roof while everyone else walks around without a care. At times you'll feel like the seams of the load-bearing vest, stretching and straining to contain the load.

Biblical love isn't always easy. It struggles, it strains, it feels the weight. Even when the weight keeps on pressing you – "bears all things" has an aspect of endurance to it. It's not a momentary or passing thing.

Fortunately, we're not in this alone. If you've read the books or seen the movies, you know a great example of this from J.R.R. Tolkien's story, *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo is carrying a ring that offers it's bearer absolute power. The problem is absolute power tends to drive people toward absolutely selfish use of power. So, the ring must be destroyed before it falls into the wrong hands. And that's the whole plot – Frodo has been given the ring and now he must travel field, river, and mountain to take the thing back to Mount Doom where it was forged in order to destroy it.

At first, He is accompanied by the Fellowship of the Ring, a group that has pledged to help protect Frodo along the way. But as they journey, most of the central characters have a moment of temptation from the ring, and it's a true test of character as they consider, if I could have the ring, would I take it?

One of them, a man named Boromir, is overcome by the temptation and even tries to forcibly take the ring from Frodo in a moment of maddening desire. At this point it is obvious that only Frodo can carry the ring without succumbing to its temptations. It is his burden to bear, and that leads to Frodo separating himself from all the others except for his dear friend Sam.

But near the end as they draw near to Mount Doom, Frodo loses his strength; he's just physically exhausted by the journey and can't go any further. And that point Sam steps in. Sam knows he can't carry the ring, but he also knows that the ring has to be destroyed and Frodo can't get there on his own.

So even though he's just as exhausted as Frodo, he picks up his friend and says, "I can't carry it, Mr. Frodo, but I can carry you" and he carries Frodo the rest of the way. It's a beautiful story, absolutely inspiring and a testimony to true friendship. Sam says, I can't bear your burden, you still have to carry it. But I can help carry you.

We see something similar in Exodus 17 – the Israelites find themselves in a battle with the Amalekites and Moses goes up to the top of a hill overlooking the battle with the rod that God gave him in his hands. And as long as his hands are raised over his head the Israelites have momentum in the battle, but when his hands fall the Amalekites take the advantage. Two men, Aaron and Hur see what is happening, and they know they can't take the rod – the symbol of God's authority and carry it for Moses, so they grab a rock for him to sit on and they get on either side and they hold up his hands while he actually holds the rod. And the Israelites wound up defeating the Amalekites that day.

Moses was God's appointed leader – He had to bear the role of leadership, no one could take it for him, but two other men stepped in and said let us support you as you support us all.

Who has God given to you to fill this role in your life? Who is there to help you bear the load that God gives to you? Who can you give thanks for in your life? And who are you filling that role for? Remember, you don't have to go in and take the load for them – they are the one who needs to bear all things, but how can you support and encourage them as they do it?

Hopefully we have those people in our lives, one of them ought to be your spouse, but even if not, we do have God and He promises never to leave us or forsake us. He promises to always be with us. He promises to give us strength. And of course, He knows our needs because Jesus bore our sins, with arms stretched out on the cross. His love bears all things.

And consider His attitude as He bore them – a few weeks ago we read that passage from Isaiah 53 which says “as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Jesus didn’t complain about having to bear all things in love. Nor did He have this bunker down and it grind it out attitude of, “well, this is just my cross to bear. You’re all knuckleheads, but I have to save you and love you, so here we go.”

One of the commentators on this passage pointed out that love bears all things “without speaking of what it has to bear. It *endures without divulging* to the world personal distress.” And points out that the term bears all things has been “Literally said of *holding fast* like a watertight vessel; so the charitable man *contains himself* in silence from giving vent to what selfishness would prompt under personal hardship.”¹

That’s the attitude we’re looking for as we bear, and it’s possible because:

5. Love believes all things – trusts God always

That is, it chooses to believe whatever isn’t obviously false – whatever it can cling to it clings to and tries to give as much credit as possible to the other person.

That doesn’t mean that love is gullible or stupid. We already know love does not rejoice in iniquity. Love doesn’t just say everything is okay when it’s obviously not. But, God sees the man or the woman that you could be, and He chooses to focus on that. And that’s how He wants us to see others.

Everyone, even at church, will eventually let you down, but can you turn them to the right angle where you see something praiseworthy in their lives and choose to emphasize that?

Think about Jesus’ choice of Peter – He knew Peter would fail, He knew Peter would deny Him, He even told Peter and what did Peter do? He denied it. But Jesus told him, “Look, it’s going to happen, but when you have turned back, strengthen the brethren.” God saw what Peter was, but He also saw what Peter could be.

So, how do you look at people? Is it always in light of how they’ve blown it in the past, or the ways they’re letting you down right now, or do you look at them with any belief that something good could come of them? That’s huge. Because the way you look at people has a tremendous impact on the way you interact with them and how you interpret everything else they say and do. If someone falls from your graces, even for good reason, is there a way for them to come back into fellowship with you as easily as they can return to fellowship with God? Do you believe all the good things about them, or are they perpetually condemned in your sight?

Brothers and sisters, we need to look for what God would approve of in others and fan it into flame. And this is closely related to number six:

¹ Jamison, Fausset, and Brown.

6. Love hope all things (is always hopeful) – Always looks for the best

Love has an eye on the future it's optimistic about how it's all going to turn out. It's hopeful that this person is going to get better as they follow Christ. And that means I don't have to fix everything that I see is wrong right now – I can hope for what things will become as I trust God to work all things together for good.

7. Love endures all things – Never looks back, but keeps going to the end, endures through every circumstance.

The best illustration of this of course is the oyster which endures a grain of sand inside it's soft flesh and slowly transform it into a valuable pearl. And the longer it endures that agitation the larger and more valuable that pearl becomes.

God doesn't expect it to be easy for us to love. He also knows we're not that easy to love. But think about what He endures for and from us.

Turn with me to **Heb 12: 1** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him **endured** the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who **endured** such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

We end this morning by remembering what we have said all along – this isn't just a love we're called to show, it's a love we're called to know. A love we're called to experience.

We're going to receive communion now and remember this love, and we prepare I want you to consider how all of this applies to you.

Have you experienced it? Do you know the love and forgiveness of Christ? If not, you need to receive it today.

And if you're having a hard time being loving, don't assume there's something wrong with you or with others, start by reflecting on how much God has loved you and then, ask Him to use you to share that love with others.