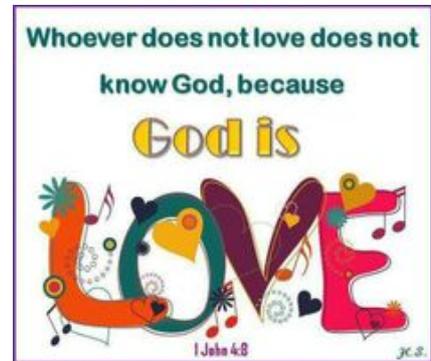


7 THINGS THAT LOVE WILL ALWAYS DO

Introduction

1. It is evident that many in the church at Corinth had been favored with a gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is further evident that they had greatly abused these endowments; some claiming precedence of honor above those that had been less distinguished. It is clear from Paul's discussion that speaking in tongues was considered the greatest of the various gifts of the Spirit, and that those so endowed were eager to exercise their gift in the assemblies. Such attitudes led to pride, arrogance, selfishness, and disdain of one another. Further, this resulted in indecent and disorderly assemblies. Paul, then, addresses these attitudes:



- a. **1 Corinthians 12.** Paul shows that the gifts were distributed to them by **one** Spirit, which were for the benefit and edification of the **one** body; each functioning member being necessary for the good and health of the whole body. Thus, one ought not to value himself above another or feel dishonored because of his place and function in which God had placed him in the body. “All filled important places in the church, just as the various members and parts of the human system were necessary for its symmetry, action and health; and all therefore, should be willing to occupy the place which God had assigned them” (Barnes).
- b. **1 Corinthians 13.** Paul highlights the superiority and value of love above every spiritual gift, and, therefore, directs them to focus on its pursuit. Spiritual gifts would eventually pass away, but love would endure, not only in this life, but into eternity.
- c. **1 Corinthians 14.** Paul, having restored them to right thinking about spiritual gifts, now gives particular rules regarding the proper exercise of spiritual gifts in their assemblies.

2. Of all the endowments one could possess, love is of the greatest value.

- a. In order to illustrate its nature, excellency, and power, the apostle focuses particularly on three points of its excellency:
 - 1) Without love, the ability to speak in the languages of men or angels, the possession of knowledge of all mysteries, and the possession of all faith, is of no value without love (**1 Corinthians 13:1-3**).
 - 2) The characteristics of love and its influences on the mind and heart (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**).
 - 3) A comparison of love with the three gifts of revelation – prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (**1 Corinthians 13:8-13**).
- b. Thus, Paul shows the superiority of love. Love will continue in heaven “and will constitute the chief glory of that world of bliss” (Barnes).

3. In the passage on love, Paul speaks of 15 things that love does do and does not do. There are 7 things that love always does do, and so I thought I would focus on them in this lesson.

“Love [i] suffers long and [ii] is kind; love **does not envy**; love **does not parade itself**, is **not puffed up**; **does not behave rudely**, **does not seek its own**, **is not provoked**, **thinks no evil**; **does not rejoice in iniquity**, but [iii] rejoices in the truth; [iv] bears all things, [v] believes all things, [vi] hopes all things, [vi] endures all things” (**1 Corinthians 13:4-7**).

7 THINGS THAT LOVE WILL ALWAYS DO

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

SEVEN THINGS THAT LOVE WILL ALWAYS DO

1. Love always suffers long.

- a. “Suffers long” is a translation of the Greek word *makrothumeo*; it is a compound word consisting of *makros*, meaning “long” and *thumos*, meaning “temper”. We often say that someone is **short-tempered**, and a perfect translation of *makrothumeo* would be **long-tempered**.
- b. Long-suffering is a characteristic of God (**Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Psalms 86:15**). It is a word used of one who has it in his power to avenge a wrong to himself and yet refrains from doing so.
 - 1) The brethren at Corinth were taking one another to court (**1 Corinthians 6:1-8**), and those exercising spiritual gifts were not able to wait their turn (**1 Corinthians 14:27-30**). They were not exercising long-suffering.
 - 2) Imagine: you are arguing with someone and then they slap your face! Your anger flares up and your first impulse is to slap them back (or worse), but instead of letting your emotions control your thinking and behavior, you must allow the voice of the Spirit to control your thinking and behavior: “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord’” (**Romans 12:19**). However much we are provoked unto anger, we must always exercise long-suffering because “Love suffers long” (**1 Corinthians 13:4a**).
 - 3) There are evils in the world that we know about and greater evils of which we are ignorant, and God sees *all* the wickedness of man every day. David wrote, “God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (**Psalms 7:11**). Despite being provoked unto great wrath, the Lord has not returned to judge the world; it’s been over 2000 years! Some regard this delay as proof that He isn’t coming at all (**2 Peter 3:4**)! But for Peter, the Lord’s delay is to be viewed as God’s patience or long-suffering and an opportunity for men to repent. God’s long-suffering equals a chance to be saved.

What will you do the next time someone says or does something that fills you with rage?

2. Love always acts kindly.

- a. “And is kind” is a translation of the Greek word *chresteuomai*; it only appears in this place and it means “to show oneself useful, that is, act benevolently: - be kind” (Strong’s). A study of the adjectives *chrestos* and *agathos*, and the nouns *chrestotes* and *philanthropia* will afford a greater understanding of *chresteuomai*. For example, the word *chrestos* is used to describe the old wine that had mellowed (**Luke 5:39**); it is not sharp or bitter but mellow.
- b. Thinking about the situation at Corinth, it is not hard to imagine the sharp and bitter speech and unkind behavior that arose because of their worldly mindedness (**1 Corinthians 3:1-3**), party spirit (**1 Corinthians 1:10-13**), pride (**1 Corinthians 8:1**), jealousy (**1 Corinthians 3:3**), etc.
- c. A Christian’s thoughts must always be godly and kind; his speech must always be pleasant and gentle, and his behavior must always be useful and benevolent. Such kindness can solve and prevent many problems.

3. Love always rejoices in the truth.

- a. “Truth” is a translation of the Greek word *aletheia*. The word “the” before the word truth indicates that objective rather than subjective truth is meant, i.e., the content of Christianity; the gospel. Since a contrast is made with iniquity or unrighteousness, one might have expected to read, “Love...does not rejoice in **unrighteousness**, but rejoices with **righteousness**”. Instead we read, “Love...does not rejoice in **unrighteousness**, but rejoices with **the truth**”. How, then, is this a contrast? It is because the gospel has such a strong practical side (the ethical commandments), which demands righteousness and holiness, that *aletheia* (truth) can properly be contrasted with *adikia* (unrighteousness)¹.
- b. The Corinthians could be said to be “rejoicing in unrighteousness” because of their carnal mindedness that resulted in a party spirit (1 Corinthians 1:10-13), overlooking sins of the flesh (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), taking one another to court (1 Corinthians 6:1-10), trampling over one another’s consciences (1 Corinthians 8:1-13), abuses surrounding the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), vying for pre-eminence in connection with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1-33), etc.
- c. On the contrary, “love...rejoices with the truth”. A Christian rejoices when brethren dwell together in unity, when brethren are willing to rather be wronged, when one makes every effort not to wound a brother’s conscience, when we seek the promotion of others rather than ourselves, when we rejoice in the gifts of others, etc. Generally, we rejoice greatly when our brethren are walking in the truth (3 John 1:4).

4. Love always bears all things.

- a. “Bear” is a translation of the Greek word *stego*; the primary meaning of *stego* is “to protect or preserve by covering” (Vine). Clarke says, “A person under the influence of this love never makes the sins, follies, faults, or imperfections of any man, the subject either of censure or conversation. He covers them as far as he can; and if alone privy to them, he retains the knowledge of them in his own bosom as far as he ought.” Barnes says, “It means, that in regard to the errors and faults of others, there is a disposition ‘not’ to notice or to revenge them. There is a willingness to conceal, or to bear with them patiently.” Edwards, commenting on this term says, “... means originally ‘cover over,’ ... then, ‘contain as a vessel.’ From this latter meaning two metaphorical uses of the word are derived, either of which may be here adopted: (1) that love hides or is silent about the faults of others; (2) that love bears without resentment injuries inflicted by others” (T. C. Edwards, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*).
- b. It is evident that the Corinthians were not bearing all things: they were not overlooking one another’s faults and patiently enduring wrongs. The fact that they were taking one another to court is sufficient to prove the point (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). The Corinthians, then, needed to learn that *love bears all things*, and it is only when they learnt to do this that the problems in the church would begin to be resolved.
- c. Love ought to be the motivation behind all that we do (1 Corinthians 16:14), and love will determine how we respond when we are called upon to “bear all things” – we will not make the sins, follies, faults, or imperfections of anyone the subject of censure or conversation. In fact, we will do all we can to cover them and keep them to ourselves.

5. Love always believes all things.

- a. “Believes” is a translation of the Greek word *pisteuo*, and the most basic meaning is “to believe” (Vine). This doesn’t mean that a Christian simply believes everything he hears because Solomon says, “The simple believes every word...” (Proverbs 14:15). As Barnes says...
 - 1) “The whole scope of the connection and the argument here requires us to understand this of the conduct of others. **It cannot mean**, that the man who is under the influence of love is a man of ‘universal credulity;’ that he makes no discrimination in regard to things to be believed; and is as prone to believe a falsehood as the truth; or that he is at no pains to inquire what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong.”

¹ See Mike Willis, Truth Commentaries, 1 Corinthians.

- 2) “But **it must mean**, that in regard to the *conduct* of *others*, there is a disposition to put the best construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others, and will not believe the contrary except on irrefragable evidence.”
- b. Paul wrote, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to carnal men, as to infants in Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:1). The Corinthians had not grown because he goes on to say, “For you are still carnal. For since there is envying (James 3:16) and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3). If anything, these brethren believed the worst of one another!
- c. Many of the difficulties between brethren arise when we fail to exercise this aspect of love – believing all things. We must not be of a disposition that is always distrustful and suspicious of others. A person of this disposition often engages in gossip and slander. How can we put this into practice? Like all aspects of love, it is something that must be “put on” (Colossians 3:14). You may not be able to prevent distrustful thoughts and suspicions arising in your mind, but you can choose to reject them. If there is insufficient grounds and no compelling evidence, then one should believe and attribute the finest motives to another’s speech and behavior. We may think good or evil of people but we always have the choice.

6. Love always hopes all things.

- a. “Hopes” is a translation of the Greek word *elpizo*. The basic meaning is “to expect with desire” (CWSD). In respect to others who are behaving like mere men, we always have an *expectant desire* for their reform and growth. Of the use of the word in this verse, Barnes says, “Hopes that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be appearances; how much soever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad people, yet that there is a ‘hope’ that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to ‘appear’ to be fair and pure. Love will ‘hold on to this hope’ until all possibility of such a result has vanished and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to ‘all things’ - to words and actions, and plans; to public and to private contact; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so”.
- b. It is true that we should all have hope in the things unseen but the context here suggests that Paul has in mind that we should hope all things in connection with our brethren.
- 1) Those who look for faults in their brethren and reasons to doubt another’s motives will surely take great pleasure when evidence appears that seems to support their suspicions. They hope that this will lead to their exposure, censure, and ruin. Some, no doubt, harboured such evil beliefs and hopes.
- 2) Paul had said that love believes all things but sometimes the evidence may weigh heavily against doing so, and it is in such cases that we exercise hope. Note the following comment...
- “This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be appearances; how much soever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad people, yet that there is a ‘hope’ that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to ‘appear’ to be fair and pure. Love will ‘hold on to this hope’ until all possibility of such a result has vanished and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation. This hope will extend to ‘all things’ - to words and actions, and plans; to public and to private contact; to what is said and done in our own presence, and to what is said and done in our absence. Love will do this, because it delights in the virtue and happiness of others, and will not credit anything to the contrary unless compelled to do so” (Barnes).

- c. If we love our brethren then we believe all things, but sometimes the weight of evidence makes it impossible. In such cases we must hope - hope that there has been a misunderstanding, hope that the evidence is, perhaps, faulty in some way.

7. Love always endures all things.

- a. "Endures" is a translation of the Greek word *hupomeno*, and it means "to bear under" (Vine). Clarke says, "Bears up under all persecutions and mal-treatment from open enemies and professed friends; bears adversities with an even mind, as it submits with perfect resignation to every dispensation of the providence of God; and never says of any trial, affliction, or insult, 'This cannot be endured.'" What is the difference between endurance (*hupomeno*) and patience (*makrothumeo* - verse 4)? The following quotes are helpful...

"We express patience toward people but we endure the things of this life. A rude and obnoxious brother may only be one of many things we *bear up under*; for one may also have to endure persecutions and trials of many kinds; in all these things we patiently endure" (D. Collins, *Quotes & Things, Commentary*).

"Love 'endures all things.' The verb *to endure* connotes perseverance and tenacity in all circumstances. It means to endure in times of pain, suffering, deprivation, hatred, loss, and loneliness. New Testament writers repeatedly exhort us to persevere: Paul tells us that if we endure with Christ, we will also reign with him (2 Timothy 2:12). Peter urges slaves to endure the pain of unjust suffering for the Lord's sake (1 Peter 2:19-20); and John on the island Patmos endures exile for the sake of God's Word (Revelation 1:9). The suffering which the apostles and early Christians had to endure for the sake of the gospel is eloquent testimony of fervent love for God" (BNTC).

- b. There were many circumstances at Corinth that would have caused some brethren to become impatient and angry but Paul urges them not to retaliate, but to be patient. But love not only suffers long (*makrothumeo*), it endures (*hupomeno*). Some might ask, "How long do I have to put up with this?" To endure a thing means to *bear up under it for as long as is necessary*. Love knows no time limit.
- c. Are there immature, carnal brethren in the church causing unrest? How do you deal with it? Paul's answer is to exercise love...love is patient and love endures for as long as it takes. How do we learn to patiently endure? Here are a few thoughts that may help you to patiently endure...
- 1) How do you know that someone is not already patiently enduring you?
 - 2) Your call to patiently endure is providential! God is seeking to build your character (James 1:3-4).
 - 3) An angry response will not achieve the righteousness of God (James 1:20), and such an outburst is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20).
 - 4) By your endurance you are showing that you are consecrated to God (2 Corinthians 6:4).
 - 5) It is through endurance that you receive the promise (James 5:11; Hebrews 10:36).
 - 6) Many who have endured before you are watching and cheering you on (Hebrews 12:1).

Conclusion

1. It is written, "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). How has God loved us? Paul says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).
2. John adds, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). In this lesson we have considered seven ways in which we exercise love toward one another: (i) Suffering long with one another, (ii) Being kind to one another, (iii) Rejoicing in one another's blessings, strengths, goodness, talents, etc., (iv) Bearing with one another's faults and imperfections, (v) Believing the very best of one another, (vi) Hoping the very best outcome for each other, and, (vii) Enduring all circumstances and difficult brethren.

3. If we always exercise these love traits, then it will result in two things: (i) Any existing problems will resolve themselves, and, (ii) It will prevent the kind of problems that we see existed in the church at Corinth.

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8).

“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” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

4. There are three scriptures that exhort us to “pursue” love (1 Corinthians 14:1; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). The word *pursue* means “to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing, to run after” (Thayer). Gordon Fee says, “Lit., pursue, strive for, seek after, aspire to...in Paul it is a favorite metaphor for spiritual effort (1 Thessalonians 5:15; Romans 12:13; 14:19; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22). The present imperative implies continuous action, i.e., ‘keep on pursuing love.’”

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