

Love Endures All Things

I Corinthians 13:7

If you have agape love *you don't need much else*, but if you don't have it, *not much else matters*. Paul defines love by describing love. He shows us what love *is* by what love *does* (I Cor.13:4-6). In verse seven we have a tetralogy: four summary phrases that help us understand what love is. "Love endures all things" – We are living in a culture that has lost any sense of *real* endurance.

I. When you *endure* you *abide* and do not personally abandon.

This word "endure" is the Greek word *hupomeno* and occurs seventeen times in the N.T. It is a compound word: *hupo* (**under**) and *meno* (**abide**). It means *to abide under a burden*. "You will be hated by all men for my sake, but he who **abides** will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Jesus is saying that a genuine Christian will not renounce Christ out of fear of persecution. In like manner, love for a person means you don't abandon, but you abide in relationship.

II. When you *endure* you support and feel no need to shame.

You don't "endure" when things are going well; you enjoy. Endurance speaks of a burden. "Hupo" speaks of being under a burden with a willingness to bear it, to lift it, to support it. Some of the greatest examples of agape love I've ever seen have been within this church. There are some occasions when the best thing a person can do for another is to separate. The separation is not for retribution or punishment, but for encouragement and correction. It is impossible to shame a loved one with words when you are helping carry the burden.

III. When you *endure* you give and don't always get in return.

This is why genuine agape love is purely selfless. It is the antithesis of Hollywood's love. It is the epitome of divine love. You may ask yourself the question, "How much do I give?" That question can only come after you begin to sweat drops of blood while you are giving. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). In Kenya they tell the story about a young Kikuyu boy who walked many miles from the beach of Mombasa to his village in the bush country, carrying a beautiful shell to give to his English teacher. The teacher gratefully said, "You shouldn't have gone so far to find this beautiful shell for me." The boy smiled and replied, "The long walk was part of the gift."

IV. When you *endure* you love people the way Christ loves you.

"Let's fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. 12:2).

There are a couple of things we can learn about love's endurance from Christ's endurance.

A. There was joy before Him. The preposition "for" in "for the joy" is often rendered "in the stead of" (2 Cor. 5:21). Instead of joy, Christ took upon Himself flesh, *for our sake*.

B. There was shame around him. In the midst of His endurance, He was naked, beaten, spat upon, cursed, and crowned with thorns. He "abided" under for you and me.

C. There was rest beneath him. *He sat down*. In the end, when you lie down at last, love will be all that counts. Love bears up, believes in, hopes for, and endures with people.