

4 Actions of Love

1 Cor. 13:1-8a

Introduction:

1. The love of this text is more action and less emotion. It demonstrates itself in concrete behaviors both positive and negative.
2. The actions described here are not all the ways that love demonstrates itself but they are clearly representative of the kind of behaviors that characterize love.
3. Like the Corinthians, our love for one another needs to be perfected, without it we are nothing more than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
4. In previous lessons we have worked our way through verses 4, 5 and 6. In this lesson we will focus on verse 7.

Discussion:

I. Love bears all things (NASB).

- A. The statement implies something that must be born up under.
- B. The word translated “bears” (stegō) literally means “to cover.” (Cf. I Pet. 4:8 says, “Love covers (kaluptō) a multitude of sins.”)
 1. It means to protect or preserve something by covering. Ex. A friendship is protected when violations are covered.
 2. The word means to keep something off which threatens.
 3. Sometimes it is translated in English with the word “endure” (cf. 1 Thess. 3:1, 5).
 4. In 1 Cor. 9:12 Paul said, “We endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.”
- C. The Corinthians seem to have been asserting their “rights” in areas of liberty in ways that created stumbling blocks to others. Paul reasoned that although he had the right to reap material things from them he did not use that right, “enduring” with them so as to cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.
 1. He demonstrated love to them.
 2. They failed to demonstrate love to their brethren.
 3. He said, “Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more” (1 Cor. 9:19).
- D. Are you demanding your “rights” or enduring the restriction of your freedoms for the benefit of others? Are you willing to make yourself a slave to others? The love of Christianity is not about what you can get, but about what you can give. Are we passing by on the other side when we should be feeling compassion, and bandaging wounds (Lk. 10:33ff)? Are we laying up treasures for ourselves when we should be being rich in good works, generous and ready to share (Matt. 6:19ff; 1 Tim. 6:17ff).

We did not learn Christ in this way. The cross teaches self-sacrificial service. Christianity is not a religion of convenience.

- E. A victim in the San Jose shooting saved his co-worker by helping her hide from the gunman and then continued to warn others, his family said. Are we demanding our rights and passing by on the other side as a San Jose Samaritan loves to the giving of his life?
- F. Love bears/covers all things.

II. Love believes all things (NASB, KJV, ESV).

- A. “Believes” is from “pisteuō.” It means to be persuaded of, to therefore place confidence in, to trust.
- B. This is not saying that a person who loves believes everything they hear. That is being naive. Love is not given to being suspicious, hesitant and withholding.
- C. Love trusts. Love sees others as generally good-willed, instead of suspecting them of evil motives. It tends to look for and see the best. When we love we expect good things even when appearances might suggest otherwise.
- D. Robertson and Plummer wrote, “When love has no evidence, it believes the best. When the evidence is adverse, it hopes for the best. And when hopes are repeatedly disappointed, it courageously waits” (ICC, p. 295).

III. Love hopes all things.

- A. The word translated “hope” is “elpizō.”
- B. Love acts with positive expectation.
 - 1. John 5:45 speaks of the Jews having set their hope on Moses.
 - 2. Paul wrote of having set his hope on God’s deliverance (2 Cor. 1:10).
 - 3. We have hope in Christ (Rom. 15:12).
 - 4. In our relationships with one another love has positive expectations.
- C. Love acts to strengthen the weak and to bring healing because it hopes for good things (Heb. 12:12). That is why Christ died for us. That is why God disciplines us. He is hoping for more than what we have delivered in the past.
- D. Paul is acting in love as he works to strengthen the Corinthians. He is expecting better things from them than the division, the arrogance, the lawsuits, the creation of stumbling blocks, the fleshliness, etc. that currently characterizes them. The Lord has blessed these Christians with gifts to be used for the edification and exhortation and consolation of others (1 Cor. 14:3). This is looking toward a positive future. Love looks toward a positive future because it hopes and so invests.

IV. Love endures all things.

- A. The word endures is from the word “hupomenō.”
- B. It denotes bearing up under suffering. It is a different word than in the first phrase of verse 7.
- C. This word carries the idea of being patiently courageous (cf. Heb. 10:32-39) and when difficulty comes riding it out all the way to the end.
- D. Now in all of these actions there is the assumption that there is suffering, difficulties and challenges to be faced. And when these are faced, love evidences itself in bearing up, believing in, hoping and standing fast all the way to the end. Love does not abandon. Love doesn't run away. Love doesn't give up on. Love takes the difficulty and doesn't quit.

Conclusion:

1. Love bears up under difficult circumstances.
2. Love works to trust people, to believe in them and it expects good things from them.
3. Love is hopeful.
4. Love endures all things. That is, it takes suffering and difficulty and challenges and does not withdraw, give up, nor quit.