

## The Greatest of These

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails.

- Larry Crabb: “Ordinary people have the power to change other people’s lives...The power is found in connection.”

### 1. Love \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 13:7 [Love] bears all things...

- To say love bears all things can mean one of two things, and possibly both.

- **Protecting love means it “\_\_\_\_\_.”**

- It means love bears with many offenses and does not stop loving even under the strain of difficulties imposed by others.
- Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

- **Protecting love means it “\_\_\_\_\_.”**

Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a *word* as is good for edification according to the need of *the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

- Think of some ways you can protect or cover your friend.
- One writer (Richard Pratt) said, “If he had in mind the concept of covering, then he may have meant that love will not seek to expose the sins of others. Love handles the sins of others in ways that will not bring exposure or shame.”
- What do we do when a friend or church member or fellow Christian says or does something not befitting a Christian?
- Rick Warren: “Fellowship is a place of grace, where mistakes aren’t rubbed in but rubbed out.”

### 2. Love \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 13:7 [Love] bears all things, believes all things...

- It’s the attitude that assumes the best in others.
- “Love gives the benefit of the doubt. Suspicion and doubt toward others do not indicate affection or love.”

- **It’s a love that looks \_\_\_\_\_.**

- Real love looks beneath the surface to the character of a person.
- Real love is discerning.
- 1 Corinthians 13:6 “[Love] does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth.”

- **It’s a love that bases expectations on the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.**

Philippians 1:6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

**3. Love \_\_\_\_\_**

1 Corinthians 13:7 [Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things...

- Believing has an eye on the present while hoping is focused on the future.
- Believing is cheering on the sanctifying work of Christ while hoping is celebrating in advance the finished work of Christ.
- 1 Timothy 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

- **Hoping in others is rooted in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.**  
Philippians 2:13 It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

- **Hoping in others means we never \_\_\_\_\_ on one another.**  
Acts 20:35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
  - Hoping in someone is to embrace the truth that we are all unfinished canvases, and the Master artist has merely completed the outline of the final painting.

**Further Thought...**

- 1) Are you who you are today because someone believed in you? If they're still alive, will you contact them this week and thank them?
- 2) Do you believe God can use you to change another person's life? How will you connect with him or her this week? How can your love protect, believe, and hope in this person?