

## ***IS THERE LASTING LOVE?, 1COR.13:7 PT2***

40 Days of Love #7

◆**Intro:** In Elmer Bendiner's book, *The Fall of Fortresses*, he describes one bombing run over the German city of Kassel: Our B-17 ("The Tondelayo") was barraged by flack from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit. Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a twenty-millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not quite that simple. On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck. The crew chief said that not just one shell but eleven had been found in the gas tanks--eleven unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us.

◆ Even after thirty-five years, so awesome an event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn. He was told that the shells had been sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer. Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were as clean as a whistle and just as harmless. Empty? Not all of them. One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually, they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling. Translated, the note read:

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"This is all we can do for you now." The Czech prisoners in the ammunition factories didn't just give up. They did whatever they could. Love is like that.

◆OK, we left off last time talking about what some keys are to lasting love. 1. To have lasting love I must choose to extend grace. (love always protects. Think umbrella!) 2. To have lasting love I must choose to express confidence. (love always trusts).

◆**3. To have lasting love I must choose to expect the good.**

◆**A.** Our text says that *love always hopes*. Love is optimistic. Love doesn't sit and spin it's wheels in the mud. It gets out of the car and figures there's a solution somehow, somewhere. Now I'm as irritated as the next guy when some rich Hollywood star writes a book about how anyone can be a star if they put their mind to it. And I must admit, I question just how deeply thinking is the gal who says "Just everyone be happy." The fact is that there are many sad facts in life. That's realism. So what does it mean that love always hopes? Is it unrealistic? Well, it means that because we love people we look for good in them, we expect positive things for them.

◆Love, in it's care for, and desire for good for the other person doesn't so much tell it like it is, as it tells it like it could be. [Much of parenting done is on the opposite end of love. We tend to see all the bad, name it, yell about it. Give lectures on it. But when the boy walks through the room *without* hitting his brother, *without* socks he wore in the mud outside, and *without* dropping

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the chips he's eating, which you were saving for a party –we don't say "Way to go, son! You're a congenial sibling, a sanitary inhabitant, *and* conscientious about both dietary balance and my party planning!" Why don't we? It's work to notice, and our love still needs developing. But you don't change bad kids into good kids by telling them they are bad. They need hope! Love always hopes.

◆**B.** Here's something else that it means when we say love "hopes or expects good." Love sees good in others, is hopeful for them precisely because love isn't hung up on itself. Here's the tie in with "Love isn't self-seeking" that we thought about two weeks ago. Lewis Smedes puts it. "Love is not in competition for power. It is not anxious. It never has anything to lose [because it is not concerned with keeping]. It does not *fear being taken advantage of, made a fool of, or being let down.*" Do you think he could be right about that? See, love is in the business of giving away. Therefore it can be hopeful about others. It believes that every person is of great worth, that an incorrigible liar is still of supreme value and a corrupt dictator has a redeemable soul, and a lousy mate is still love-worthy before the Creator God. As you can see, this kind of thinking comes from Jesus' thinking. It is the power to believe more than the evidence requires.

◆*To be hopeful is to face the future with some kind of gladness, to sense that the present is worth living because we expect that*

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*the future will somehow bring what we deeply need or desire. -*  
Even if it is not in our immediate future. Even if you might have to wait for God's pure Kingdom to settle on the earth in the Last Days. You can treat others hopefully (love always hopes) if there is a God who promised to make a redeemed future happen. Well friends, the promise of Christ is to make all things new! The promise of Christ is to end all tears, and all pain. The promise of Christ is that my sin has been eternally undone by his perfection.

*◆"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son." Revelation 21:3-7, NIV.*

*◆This is what is coming for you who have trusted Jesus for forgiveness of sin! You cannot lose! You can afford to hope, and therefore, to love!*

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◆**C.** Lets talk about what does this looks like in life? When we really love, we don't label. Fathers, don't think you will motivate your sons like this. "You always do \_\_\_\_\_. You're just a sissy..." You will not. You will damage them at an early age. That will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. *When we love we tell it like it can be.*

◆"Son, I can tell you're gonna do well in college because you apply yourself. You care. I can see you have abilities."

◆"Honey, you're cooking just keeps getting more creative. I had no idea shoe leather could taste so good!"

◆Who in your life do you need to expect good from? Love doesn't stop hoping. It extends grace, it expresses confidence, it expects good. One more.

◆**4. To have a love that lasts I must choose to endure whatever.**

◆**A.** Paul writes that *Love always perseveres.* The greek term is **υπομενω** . It means "under-staying". Lasting love has staying power. It decided to endure. That is, when we truly love like God loves, circumstance has nothing to do with it. That's what marrying partners used to promise each other: love for better or worse. Better or worse have nothing to do with love. Real love will just keep going when things turn sour. (Is this making you question how well you are obeying Heaven's command to love your wife, your neighbor, your enemy?) Love, as we've seen all through 1 Cor.13, isn't about warm feeling. These adjectives are

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decisions that get chosen! "Love is patient..." You don't wait to *feel* patient. You behave patiently! "Love does not boast..." You don't wait to feel humble. You behave humbly and toot their horn instead! Love that lasts is a love that consciously accepts strain, and loves anyway. Love is far more than merely hanging on, or surviving, or living through it. It is a decision to be something.

◆ Let me ask you a question. What do you want your relationships to be? What do you want your marriage to be? Mushrooms or oaks? A mushroom takes 6 hours to mature. An oak takes 60 years. But you can drive a car into an oak and the oak will win. Your infant daughter can decimate a mushroom in seconds. Oak-love chooses to "remain under", endure it all.

◆ **B.** What will "enduring whatever" look like in life? Well, when the going gets tough, love looks for help to endure. People who choose love, also choose a counsellor when their marriage is getting distant. Love chooses suffering and walks into its flame on purpose. For example, you've had an argument. You're both steamed. You've stormed off. You avoid each other, nursing the bitter feelings, rehearsing how unfairly it went down. You know that to begin to resolve it will require work, discussion, conflict, apology –none of which is comfortable. Love sets its face and walks over. It says, "I will endure this suffering to make it right."

◆ Evil always wants to produce more evil. The evil of a child's death threatens another evil in the parents; that of believing there is no more reason to smile, to go on. Love fights evil. Love

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doesn't toss the pain away. It "stays under", but it chooses to do the hard work of discovering purpose, joy, goodnesses of God along side the rotten tomatoes of life.

◆ **Conclusion:** As we said in week one, Learning to produce this beautiful product called love is why he put us on this planet. And Jesus alone holds and offers the power. He asks us to love in only the same way as he loves us. "By this shall all men know" we are his... John 13:34-35

◆ "God is patient, God is kind. God does not envy, God does not boast, God is not proud. God is not rude, God is not self-seeking, God is not easily angered, God keeps no record of wrongs. God does not delight in evil but God rejoices with the truth. God always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, NIV.

◆ That's the content of these 40 Days friends. God always extends grace, always expresses confidence, always expects good, always endures whatever. This communion table is the symbol of love itself! It's how far God would go to love you. The real secret to lasting love is to ask God to love through you! To daily bow to his love. To ask him in to yours.

◆ Pray with me about that right now. Jesus, I invite you to love through me. And to do that, I invite you to live in me. I repent of my sin for it keeps me from love. I want to thank you for the love that brought you from heaven to pay my debt and offer me

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life. And now, Jesus, I pray for the same kind of love you have shown me, so I may show it to the people in my life. Amen.