

46-13-12-Practicing the Power of Love
 protection, trust, hope, endurance, love
 1 Cor 13:7

When trouble comes along, love stands firm and strong.

INTRODUCTION:

–*God’s Love isn’t sentimentality, but divine power (more an active verb than a descriptive noun). “God IS love.” If He lives in us, Love lives in us. But to live out Love’s attitudes and actions, we must practice Love’s presence, peace, and perspective. This means rejecting past childish habits and having a new childlike receptivity to God’s will and ways. All this holds true for practicing Love’s power, described in 1 Cor 13:7.*

–*Jesus said in John 16:33, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” His “peace” in life’s “trouble” [lit., pressure] comes from union with Him. His moral victory is ours through His Love’s powerful presence.*

–*Love’s power fills the Love Chapter, but especially in v.7, It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. HOM.idea. Notice that*

I. Love Faces Four Sets of “all things” – v.7 (CSB), *It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

A. Love can face trouble from 4 directions at once. (If we know how troubles arise, we more easily overcome them.) **Troubles come:**

1. *from within (old bad habits of an inner child of the past)*
2. *from relationships with others (who also need inner healing)*
3. *from a troubled society (alienated from God and hostile to us)*
4. *from spiritual attack– Eph 6:12, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against... the powers of this dark world... spiritual forces of evil...*

B. Effectively facing this fourfold array of “all things” requires Love’s perspective– v.6, “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

1. *Discerning the spiritual nature of “all things” is Love’s first job.*
2. *In Gen 1:31a, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Love values “all” parts of creation, even if they need transformation.)*

TRANS: *God uses Love’s behaviors (“always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres”) to transform “all things.” But in transforming us, He leads us out of childishness and into childlikeness. Let’s see how God does this using Love’s behaviors with these 4 sources of trouble...*

II. Love Keeps the Situation Covered— “[Love] *always protects...*”

- A. The literal meaning of the NIV’s “*protects*” is “*covers*” [**Gk**=“thatched roof”], is usually rendered in the NT as “*bears*.” (**I combined these two ideas**: “*Love ‘bears all things’ by protectively sheltering us from getting soaked by successes that inflate the head or by sorrows that deflate the heart, almost like ‘water off a duck’s back.’*”)
- B. **If troubles come along, love remains strong.** (Whatever situation we’re in, *God is in control*, and therefore, *Love has us covered*.)
1. Fame that flatters a childish ego, or defeats that depress wounded emotions, roll off a roof where Love is housing Christ’s “peace.”
 2. Love, on meeting *immaturity* in someone else, stays calm, cool and collected, [and “*quietly covers all things*” (**KJ3**), as in **1 Pe 4:8**. Above all, **love** each other deeply, because **love covers** over a multitude of sins.]
 3. Society promotes childishness, but childlike receptivity to God’s love thickens our skin— **Rom 12:2 (Phillips)**, Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.
 4. When demons attack, Love fights back— **Jam 4:7**, **Submit** yourselves, then, to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will **flee** from you. (Our childlike openness in submitting to Love’s power is Satan’s nightmare!)

III. Love Keeps an Optimistic Faith— “[Love] *always trusts...*” [or lit., “*believes all things*,” the verb-form of the noun “*faith*” used all over the NT.]

- A. Romantic love, it’s said, “*is blind*,” but Love, Who romanced “all things” into existence, sees even what’s not yet there— **Heb 11:3 (ESV)**, By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
- B. In “*all things*,” God wants us like Him, speaking with Love’s faith.
1. When inner wounds disrupt life, “[Love] *always trusts*” in healing.
 2. In stormy relationships, “[Love] *always trusts*” in prayer’s power.
 3. In worldly trials, “[Love] *always trusts*” (**1 Cor 10:13**) God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.
 4. In spiritual battle, “[Love] *always trusts*” in putting on God’s armor.

IV. Love Keeps Expecting Victory— “[Love] *always hopes...*”

- A. Faith leads us into hope, because “we walk by faith, not by sight” and **Rom 8:24b** says “**hope** that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he

already has?” (Not an “*I-hope-so*” hope but a confident anticipation.)

- B. Love eagerly expects “all things” God promises to really happen!
1. Love abolishes our gambling for past “childish ways” to finally win the lottery. (Maturity invests in a sure win— **1 Ti 4:10 (CSB)**, For this reason we labor and strive, because we have put our **hope** in the living God, who is **the Savior of all people**, especially of those who believe.)
 2. Yes: “**Savior of all people**”! (Even if not yet believers, Love “hopes” all those we love or meet find salvation by faith in Christ.)
 3. Love’s expectancy meets the hostile influences around us with utter confidence in God’s intervention— **1 Pet 1:13 (CSB)**, Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be sober-minded and **set your hope completely** on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 4. If assailed by spiritual darkness, “[Love] *always hopes*” — **Rom 8:24a**, “**For in this hope** we were saved,” a hope in Christ’s 2nd Advent, for we know what His 1st Advent did for us— **1 John 3:8b (CSB)**, The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the devil’s works.

V. Love Keeps Hanging On— “[Love] *always perseveres...*”

- A. [**“God gives a promise**; faith believes it, hope anticipates it, patience hangs on to it.”] (Believers are on trial, being tested by life’s many troubles, but Love’s mighty power equips us to hang— **Jam 1:12**, Blessed is the man who **perseveres** under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has **promised** to those who **love** him.)
- B. “When life gets tough, the tough” may trip, when they “get going.”
1. But in the long, painful process of inner healing, Love hangs on!
 2. With difficult people, Love “endures all things” with faith and hope.
 3. In a world against us, Love “perseveres,” because Jesus in for us!
 4. When Satan trips us, we hang on to our “sword” [God’s Word] and our “shield of faith,” getting back up into a prayerful battle stance.

CONCLUSION:

—**When troubles churn, love stands firm. Inner healing for familiar bad habits and poor attitudes, divine help in troubled relationships with others, supernatural power to face worldly and demonic opposition— all these powerful resources are at our disposal! They belong to us! They’re ours in Love**, for “**God is love**,” and He indwells us, through our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ! **Let’s practice the power of love!**