

“Love bears all things” 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 7

The love of God within us is strong enough to enable us to endure any hardship, opposition or persecution. That is because it is God's love, and not our own. That's one of the reasons that, in order to love God and others effectively, we need to be in connected relationship with him, drawing love from him, reflecting it back to him and extending it through our own lives into the lives of others.

Human love will not bear all things. Human love is conditional. It thinks that love is not real unless it involves emotions, and it depends on loveable or deserving qualities in the life of another person. Secular humanity is subject to evolutionary principles of the survival of the fittest at the expense of the weakest, so in the end it will always be self-serving. God's love in us will always seek the best good of another person and obedience to God, even if that means personal self sacrifice. We see that in the lives of missionaries who go to places where they know they are putting their lives in danger in order to bring the gospel, and in the martyrs who give their lives rather than deny their faith. Human love could never do that.

The love of God in and through us does not give up when loving becomes difficult. It does not withdraw from another person through annoyance, impatience, anger or distaste. It does not pull out when a task is no longer novel or exciting but becomes routine and boring. It is not afraid to offer a rebuke, or a reproof, or a word of warning if that is in the best interests of another, and it does this with gentleness, wisdom and respect. It has a thick enough skin to deflect offences, insults and criticism and is able to forgive wrongs.

The love of God in us is indestructible. Our part is to choose to respond to others with God's love rather than our own, insufficient, human love.

Prayer.

Father, I know that all too often I try to love you and others with my own human resources, and I fall short. I get impatient, I misunderstand, I find myself judging, and I set conditions under which I will offer love to others. Please help me get close to you so that I may access your love and know how I may use your indestructible love to minister to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

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