

1. Love is Always Faithful

- a. In Greek, there is only the plural word "all" without referent, i.e. "all what?"
 - i. ESV, NAS, and KJV all interpret the "all" as referring to objects by inserting the English word "things" behind all.
 - ii. The NIV interprets the referent of all to be temporal, i.e. times by translating the "alls" as "always", i.e. "at all times"
- b. I believe that the NIV is correct in this instance because of the clearly temporal oppositional word, "never" in v8.
 - i. In this way, Paul is really emphasizing love's faithfulness with 4 positives (always endures) and 1 negative (never collapses)
 - ii. If the 4 "all" statements were dealing with objects, i.e. "things" then the temporal comparative in v8 wouldn't poetically nor rhetorically make sense
 - iii. Therefore, I believe that the apostle means "at all times" Love covers up, believes, hopes, and endures. In other words, it never collapses or gives up or throws in the towel.
- c. Parallel construction, chiasm
 - i. *στεγω* and *υπομενω*
 1. “covers” is related to “endures”
 2. Love covers the gap of a defenseless position and stands firm to hold it
 - ii. *πιστευο* and *ελπιδα*
 1. “believes” is related to “hopes”
 2. Love trusts God for future good because God is powerful and capable of resurrecting me from the dead
 - iii. *πιπτω* - The primary point is that “love never collapses”

2. Love Always Protects its Beloved's Flourishing (*στεγω*)

- a. to cover up for the purpose of keeping away harm, defending flourishing (life)
 - i. It comes from the word which means “roof” or “covering”, and from which “stegosaurus” is derived because of the plates on its back
 - ii. cf. 9:12
 1. covered up their right of remuneration *for the sake of the Corinthians*
 - a. note the reason, “so that we did not create a hindrance to the gospel”
 - b. They covered up a right they possessed, so that there would be no reason for the gospel to be rejected by the Corinthians, i.e. for their good
 - i. The harm here is an obstacle that might keep one from the gospel
 - ii. By hiding their rights, they eliminate any physical payment as a harm to the gospel
 2. The phrase in 9:12 is the same as 13:7, “always covered” (*παντα στεγομεν*)
 - a. It wasn't that they covered all things, but that they were consistently and continually covering up any right to physical support among the Corinthian churches
 - iii. cf. 1 Thess 3:1,5
 1. hindered from speaking (negative) in 1 Thess 2:16-3:5 so they sent Timothy to speak encouragement of the gospel in their stead *for their good*
 2. In other words, Paul *couldn't* cover up his desire to hear from them any longer *for the good exhortation and encouragement* of the Thessalonians
 - a. The harm here was false teaching, the work of Satan, so he uncovered his previous desire and sent Timothy to visit, teach, exhort, and defend
- b. Love covers the gap of a defenseless position in order to defend its object
 - i. Love may stay silent, refusing to demand to be loved well (as in 9:12)
 - ii. Love may also reject silence for the purpose of defending its object (1 Thess 3:1,5)
 - iii. But *all motivation for speaking or silence is for the protection and publishing of life*
- c. Thus, love which covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8) is the attitude and commitment to protect its object, often by covering one's own mouth by resisting to demand its rights

- i. This can be pertaining to what one has a right to say, but shouldn't (for the sake of one's flourishing)
 - 1. EXAMPLE: "Letting the small stuff go" – immediate, forgiveness of amoral irritants
 - a. If your roommate leaves the refrigerator door open, just close your mouth and close the door
 - b. When others aren't loving you perfectly, you don't bring it up all the time, but bear it up yourself
 - ii. Or, it could be pertaining to remaining meek in the face of provocation, bearing up insults, so to speak
 - 1. EXAMPLE: "Bearing up in silence"
 - a. If your spouse snaps at you after having a rough day with the kids, you close your mouth and move towards them in compassionate mercy
 - b. These are acts of mercy with a closed mouth, knowing when to move forward to reveal sin and when to cover sin up under the cloak of mercy
 - c. You leave that person in the hands of God's Spirit to reveal the sin, you remain silent
 - i. Ps 130:3 – "If you tallied our iniquities, who could bear it?"
 - iii. Or, it could be that love doesn't speak of confidences that another has placed upon it, i.e. love doesn't gossip, for it doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but in holiness
 - 1. Cf. Sirach 8:17 (LXX apocrypha), "don't consult with a fool; for he cannot 'cover' a word."
 - 2. In other words, a fool can't keep his mouth shut, so don't consult with him.
 - d. Therefore, the positive aspect which love works in this sense, is the work of protecting its object from de-glorying, harmful situations
 - i. It is to endure in bearing up the reproach of its beloved
 - ii. It is to protect the reputation and honor of its beloved
3. Love Always Protects Because it Always Depends on God's Goodness and Grace (*πιστευω*)
- a. Again, it is not that love believes *anything* (that would be preposterous and completely opposed to Truth), but rather than love always trusts
 - i. The question, then, is what is the object of trust?
 - ii. The LORD, I contend!
 - b. By always trusting the Lord, rejoicing in His Truth, entrusting oneself to His provision, protection, and promises, then we can love others well in spite of whether or not they are trustworthy or will treat us well
 - i. All anxiety comes from believing that the Lord will not do something which He has promised.
 - ii. Thus, not loving others well always stems from the fear that God will not grant me what I need (comfort, rest, security, love, affection, etc.) and the other person only will if I coerce them to do so.
 - 1. We coerce such responses by trying to force people through guilt, shame, wearing them down, etc.
 - 2. Yet, we know that these are not true affections, so we are never satisfied, only controlling and manipulative
 - iii. Rather than protecting the other by covering our mouths, we manipulate others by opening our mouth
 - 1. This is because we do not believe God to be trustworthy or sufficient, and we don't believe the other person can be trusted, either
 - c. Love always entrusts itself to God and therefore can die the deaths which love requires for the flourishing of the other
 - i. Jesus was willing to go to the cross *for our sake* because He entrusted Himself to the Father
 - 1. Luke 22:42 – "Not my will, but yours be done."
 - 2. Luke 23:46 – Jesus handed over His spirit *to the Father* and nobody else

3. 1 Peter 2:23 – He endured such hostility because “he kept entrusting Himself to the one who judges justly”
- ii. Love lays down its life for the sake of its brothers (1 John 3:16)
 1. It only does so because it believes the promise of God: that He is able to resurrect that which we lay down.
 2. If we don’t really believe that God will keep His Word, then we don’t love well, protect well, stand in the gap and bear the fiery darts for the sake of others
4. Love Always Hopes in God’s Promise and Power (ἐλπίζω)
 - a. Love is certain of future good because God has promised it.
 - b. Hope is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus
 - i. 1 Peter 1:3-5
 - ii. This hope is a living hope – not a dead or dying hope, a wistful wish, or a groundless uncertainty
 - c. Love dares to hope because Jesus is alive!
 - i. He is our present Savior to know, love, trust, and to whom we cling in the midst of furious storms and sufferings of life
 - ii. We have been given His Spirit to enable us to love well, to die to ourselves, to pour out our strength for the protection and flourishing of others
 1. Rom 8:13-17 – We have been given the Spirit of sonship to walk like Him
 2. Rom 15:13 – joy and peace come through believing so that by His Spirit we might abound in hope
 3. Gal 5:5 – we wait for our hope of righteousness by faith, *through the Spirit*
 - a. We do not have to attain the recognition of our rightness by others, we wait for it
 - b. We do not need to be appreciated, honored, revered by others, for we have righteousness waiting for us at our resurrection
 4. The same Spirit of God which empowered Jesus to live for the glory of the Father, for righteousness, to love to death, dwells within us for the glory of God!
 - a. Take hope in His promise: they all find their ‘yes’ in Christ Jesus!
 - d. Love dares to hope because God’s Spirit has caused us to be born again
 - i. We are born again to a living hope by God’s Spirit
 1. God makes things new, regenerates dead hearts, enlivens weakened hearts, opens blinded eyes
 2. You are not what you used to be: Holy Spirit begets holy children!
 - ii. We hope because God can do the impossible
 1. Love always hopes in the power of God to transform both myself and others, even when I am receiving nothing from the other person
 2. This leads us to dependent, expectant, bold prayers to the God who can do the impossible
 3. There really is no room for cynicism in love, for love always hopes in the power of God
 - a. We only see a fraction of what is happening in life, an infinitesimal sub-atomic view of reality
 - b. And we tend to become discouraged, i.e. hopeless, because we do not see the change which we would desire to see
 - c. Yet, love does not see the past failures as necessary determinations of future reality
 - d. Love sees the power of God as capable of dramatic and transformation change: RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD
 - iii. Love always hopes because it believes that God is capable of raising dead things to life
5. Because its Hope is in God, Love Always Endures (ὑπομένω)
 - a. Love always stands firm, bracing, supporting, upholding others (“to remain under”)
 - i. This is kind of a military endurance – standing in the gap of the line, defending its object with tenacity, courage, and a willingness to be stepped on

- ii. Love honors others as more worthy of protection than itself
 - 1. Romans 12:10 – “be devoted to one another in love, esteeming one another as greater in honor...serving the Lord”
 - b. This is a recapitulation of the first term, “protects” or “covers”, but comes from underneath
 - i. This is the emphasis on humility which love exhibits in its protection, the willingness to “remain under” another for their sake, for their flourishing
 - c. This is the love of Christ exhibited in His incarnation, submitted life, submitted death, resulting in his exalted resurrection and being seated at the right hand of God
 - i. Submission comes before honor
 - ii. Death comes before resurrection
 - iii. Each prior act is done in faith and hope of future glory *from God and by God*
- 6. It is the Nature of Divine Love to Never Collapse (πιπτω)
 - a. This is a summary of the previous four positives: LOVE NEVER COLLAPSES
 - i. Love never gives up, never falls apart, never walks away to wash its hands of another under the weight of suffering or even death because it believes and hopes in God
 - b. The only reason that love might collapse is because its object has not delivered some good to it
 - i. This is why we fail to lay down our lives, to protect, stand firm for the defense of another: We wanted something *from* the other person, not the person himself
 - ii. Therefore, when that person does not give us what we want, we fail to defend their flourishing
 - iii. What we see is that when we don’t love another person, but only love what they can give to us, we don’t protect them *for their sake*, but only for our own sake (only when it gets me what I need)
 - c. To love someone is to delight in what a person is supposed to be, and that means it longs to protect the way things are supposed to be *for God and for them*.
 - d. “This is how we know love: He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16a)
 - i. That is, He never gives up, never collapses, steps in the breach to protect you, never speaks or works to demean you, and it is God who holds this to be true.
 - ii. His labors, sufferings, and trials were achieved because He entrusted Himself to the Father and hoped in Him
 - 1. “All whom the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and whomever comes to me, I will never cast out.” (John 6:37)
 - 2. Jesus never gave up because He trusted in the Father, never gave in because He hoped in the Father, and always persevered because He trusted and hoped in the Father to grant to Him a Bride fit for Him through His work.
 - iii. This means that Christ’s love for you is not rooted in your ability to love him!
 - 1. This is great and freeing news!
 - 2. You cannot out-sin the love of Christ Jesus for you, for His love and faithfulness and dedication to you are not contingent upon your ability to love God well or love others well.
 - 3. His love is for you, not what you can gain him.
 - a. Tread boldly where angels fear to walk, for your God is your FATHER
 - b. Tread humbly where angels fear to walk, for your Father is GOD

“And this is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:39-40)