Attitudes of the Heart
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Preface

Many churches put an inordinate emphasis on outward conformity and reformation and teach very little on spiritual attitudes of the heart. For this reason, when I became the Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in April of 2010, one of my first priorities was to teach a series on internal attitudes that the Holy Spirit desires to produce in every Christian. This book is the culmination of that series.

How to use this Book

Open the Bible. This book is designed for Bible study. In order to fully benefit from the studies contained here, you must be willing to open your Bible and search the scriptures for answers. These studies are based upon the King James Version of the Bible. If you are accustomed to reading another version you may need to have both opened in order to discover the right answers.

Take your Time. The purpose of any Bible study is not to race to the finish line. If your time spent studying scripture does not produce a better understanding of the word of God then it is in vain. Take your time going through these studies. Stop and think about what you’ve read and take the time to apply the truths to your life.

Reflect. Throughout these studies you will see the symbol followed by a question. There is no room to write an answer because these are designed for meditation. Take a minute and think about how the question applies practically to your life. Apply the study and be willing to change where God prompts you to. You will also see questions prefaced by Think. These were originally questions for open discussion in our church. There are no right or wrong answers for these just your own personal opinion.

Pray. Bible truths are only imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. While you study, pray that God would help you to understand and apply His word to your life.

Contact

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Find me on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/rickcowan and Twitter: @rick_cowan
So far we have seen attitudes of faith, obedience, growth and self-discipline. These attitudes are, for the most part, God-directed. That is, they pertain to our attitude toward God and our relationship with him. We turn a page in this study as we look at the attitude of **Love**. Love is primarily seen in our interactions with and attitudes toward **others**. It is the most all-encompassing of the others-oriented attitudes. If a Christian has in his heart an attitude of love, many other spiritual attitudes will naturally flow from it. Let us first consider the **primary** role that love plays in the life of a Christian.

### The Primacy of Love

Love is so central to God’s character that it can be simply stated; *God is love* (1 John 4:8). It was love that brought Jesus to earth (1 John 4:9; John 3:16), it was love that lead him to heal multitudes (Matt 14:14), it was love that drove him to *seek and save the lost* (Matt 9:36; Luke 19:10), it was love that lead him to the cross (1 John 4:10; Rom 5:8) and it is by his love that he dwells within us today (1 John 4:16; Rom 5:5). Because love is central to God’s character, it is also foundational to the teachings of Jesus Christ. So much so, that the idea of loving others became known as the “law of Christ.”

📖 James 2:8. **Q.** What is the “royal law?”

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📖 Galatians 6:2. **Q.** How can we fulfill the “law of Christ?”

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**John 13:35**

By this shall all **men** know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
Christ’s theme of loving was so strong and so clear that it became an evident characteristic of discipleship. Even the unsaved could observe the love among Christian brethren and immediately conclude that they must have been disciples of Christ.

John 3:11. Q. What message was heard from the beginning of Christ’s ministry?

John 13:34-35. Q. What commandment did Christ give?

Q. What example should we follow in loving one another?

Q. What would be the result of our love for one another?

It is because love is so central to the character and teachings of Jesus Christ that one cannot claim to be his disciple and not also love like he loved.

1 John 4:8. Q. What is not true about someone who does not love? Why?

1 John 3:23. Q. What two things did John describe as “his [Christ’s] commandment?”

Think. What does the fact that John has grouped these two things together as one commandment tell us about salvation and Christian love?

The power of our testimony for Christ lies in the evidence that He has changed our lives. This change is displayed when we love others like He loved. This is the love that seeks the salvation of the lost and loves the brethren even to the point of sacrifice (1 John 3:17; Php 2:4).
Paul taught the primacy of love in the fifth chapter of Galatians when he mentioned love first in the list of spiritual character qualities (Gal 5:22). He emphasized its primacy once again in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Q. The word charity here is the word Agape, meaning God-like love. What things did Paul list as secondary to love?

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Paul’s ultimate point was that even the best gifts, practiced without love, are useless. In the third chapter of Colossians we read a list of great Christian virtues. At the end of this list, after Paul has listed mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness he again emphasizes the primacy of love (charity).

Colossians 3:14 And _________________________________ put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Love is the virtue that binds all the rest of Christian character together. All of the fruit of the Spirit and all of the gifts of the Spirit are to be saturated with love. Without it we become empty shells, poor representatives of Christ and hurtful to his cause.

If love is so central to Christianity, what should you do if you find yourself with an unloving heart?

The Personality of Love

We have already learned the importance of love; that it is central to the character of God and that it should characterize all of his children. Now let’s consider the personality of love. How does love behave? Paul answers this question in one of the most oft-quoted chapters of scripture – 1 Corinthians 13.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
Now, let’s consider the *personality of love*:

### 1. Love is Steadfast - 1 Cor 13:4 Charity suffereth long...

1 Corinthians 13:4 begins “Charity suffereth long.” The word here literally means to be “long tempered” or to “patiently endure.” Practically, this can be seen as one is provoked over and over again yet refuses to retaliate (1 Pet 3:9). It is this love that enables us to forgive others even when they repeatedly offend us (Matt 18:22).

📖 1 John 1:9. Q. How does this verse illustrate God’s steadfast love?

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True love is enduring. It is not swayed by circumstances, nor does it wear thin over time. Love is not diminished when we are annoyed or irritated by others. A fleeting love is no love at all.

**REFLECT**

> What does it reveal about your attitude toward others when their faults cause you to treat them unlovingly?

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### 2. Love is Serving - 1 Cor 13:4 Charity is kind...

Because love is *steadfast* it endures suffering. It can take the hurts, offenses or lack of love that others dish out. Over and above this longsuffering there is *kindness*. Kindness does more than endure hurts. It actively seeks to be gracious and serving toward others. Even more than this, true love serves those who do not deserve to be served.

📖 Luke 6:27-36. Q. According to v27, who should we love?

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> True love serves even those who do not deserve to be served.

v32-34. Q. What should be distinct about Christian love, compared to the love of “sinners?”

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v35-36. Q. What will *we* be if we love our enemies like Christ instructed us in this passage? What does this mean?
v35. **Q. Who is God kind to?**

It is God’s kindness fueled by his love that lead Him to send Jesus Christ to be our savior (Titus 3:4-6) and He did this while we were *yet sinners* (Rom 5:8). God now asks us to show the same loving kindness to others even when they do not deserve it, just as He has done for us.

### 3. **Love is Sincere - 1 Cor 13:4 Charity envieth not...**

Next in 1 Cor 13:4 we read *charity envieth not*. True love is not *jealous*. This is not speaking of being “jealous for” someone as God is for his people (Ex 20:4-5; Ex 34:14) but being jealous *of* someone. A husband or wife may be jealous *for* their spouse, meaning they want their spouse to be faithful and belong to them and them alone. This can be a healthy “jealousy” but it is not the jealousy that is spoken of here.

The jealousy spoken of here is always sinful and one of the most destructive sins we can commit. Proverbs 27:4 tells us *Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?* Consider the following examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who was Jealous of whom?</th>
<th>Why were they Jealous?</th>
<th>What did it lead to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☞ Luke 15:25-30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☞ Gen 37:4, Acts 7:9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☞ Acts 13:45</td>
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<td>☞ Gen 4:3-8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☞ Matt 27:17-18</td>
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</table>
Jealousy lead the crowd to deliver Jesus to death, Joseph’s brothers to sell him into slavery, Cain to murder his brother, the Jews to resist Paul and the prodigal’s brother to be stirred to anger. It is easy to see how devastating envy can be!

Jealousy can be a matter of wanting something that someone else has or wanting to be something that someone else is (status, acclaim, following, etc). No matter the type of jealousy, it is all rooted in pride. It is believing that we are more deserving of benefits or privileges than others. This is the complete opposite of Paul’s exhortation in Philippians 2:3 to Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

As devastating as all envy is, there is one type of envy that is more sinister than the rest. It is the jealousy that not only says “I wish I had what they had” but goes one step lower and says “I wish they did not have what they have.” This is the jealousy, rooted in hate that actually wishes ill upon others. There is no possible scenario in which this type of jealousy and love could dwell in the same heart.

1 Corinthians 12:26. Q. How should the members of a church respond when they see another member “honoured?”

REFLECT

Have you ever thought negatively toward someone who has been blessed? What does your negative attitude say about your love toward that person?

4. Love is Self-Effacing - 1 Cor 13:4 Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up...

Love is not jealous because it is not prideful. It does not vaunt itself (brag), nor is it puffed up (arrogant). Bragging is nothing more than trying to create jealousy in others!

Prov 8:13. Q. If you fear the Lord, what will you hate?

Prov 16:18. Q. What does pride lead to?
Eph 2:8-9. Q. Why can’t anyone boast of their salvation?

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1 Cor 1:26-29. Q. How did God ensure that no flesh could boast (glory) in His presence?

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God despises pride so much (Prov 6:16-19; Prov 21:4) that he has designed the salvation plan in such a way that no one can be saved while also taking credit for their salvation. No flesh will be able to boast or brag in the presence of God. Whenever we brag about our accomplishments we exalt ourselves and challenge God as the only one who deserves glory. (Isa 48:11)

Think. How would a Biblical understanding of the nature of man help us to avoid bragging?

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5. Love is Self-Restraining - 1 Corinthians 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly...

The word unseemly means “rude” or “discourteous.” Remember that Paul is addressing the Corinthians who had much to be corrected in their church. Paul has already corrected them for permitting an adulterous brother to continue in the church without rebuke. He went on in the eleventh chapter to address their disorderly worship services and their misuse of spiritual gifts in the twelfth chapter.

Think. How would a Biblical understanding of the nature of man help us to avoid bragging?

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What better picture of rudeness than someone cutting in line for the best food! Rudeness comes about when we put our needs or wants ahead of the desires of others. It seeks to ensure that we are satisfied even at the expense of other people. The Corinthians had developed a pattern of rudeness in their church. In the fourteenth chapter we learn that even during their worship services the Corinthians were vying for the spotlight. True love is not rude but kind, gracious and considerate
Think. It seems like rudeness can sometimes come very naturally to us while courtesy requires extra effort. What can we do to ensure that we remember to be courteous to others?

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6. Love is Self-Denying - 1 Corinthians 13:5 Charity seeketh not her own...

Paul goes on to say that love seeketh not her own. That is, it is not selfish but concerned about the wellbeing of others.

1 Cor 10:23-24. Q. In this passage Paul indicates that “all things are lawful” for him. What was more important to him than whether or not something was lawful?

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Q. If we are less concerned about our rights and what we are “allowed” to do, what will the result be? (v24)

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Php 2:3-4. Q. If we, through humility, esteem others as better than ourselves what will we do?

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Someone who is overly concerned with their “rights” is likely to overlook the needs of others while he fulfills his own lusts. In the fourteenth chapter of Romans Paul tells us that he would be willing to forgo eating all meat if it meant protecting his weaker brethren from offense. True love is willing to deny itself if it means the betterment of others.

1 Cor 6:7-8. Q. Once again, the Corinthians serve as an example of how not to love. What were they doing to one another?
Q. What did Paul say they should rather have done?

The Corinthians were so concerned with their rights and what was rightfully “owed” them that they were suing one another in secular courts. A loving attitude would have taken a loss before it did anything to harm his brother or the testimony of Christ.

Have you ever expressed an unloving attitude toward a brother in Christ in the presence of unbelievers? How do you think this made them feel about the church and Jesus Christ?

Matt 20:28. Q. Jesus did not come to earth to be served. Why did he come? How did he do this?

God is love and Christ is God in the flesh. He is our perfect example of love. Not only did he display his love by dying on the cross for us, but his entire life is an example of how to deny ourselves and how to serve others.

Love is not selfish. How are you at giving up your own rights and privileges for others? Are you willing to deny yourself for the benefit of others?

7. Love is Serene - 1 Corinthians 13:5 Charity is not easily provoked...

Have you ever found yourself short-tempered with others or prone to outbursts of emotion? Another characteristic of love is that it is not easily provoked. The book of Proverbs praises those who are slow to anger and has few kind things to say about a man who is angered easily.

Prov 16:32. Q. Who is better than the mighty? Who is better than one that “takes a city?”
Who are the successful ones in this life? Generally those who outpace their competition, defeat their enemies or who rule over others. Proverbs tells us that God has a different measure of success. The one who controls himself is far greater than the one who controls others.

Proverbs 25:28 says *He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* A person who is angered quickly is susceptible to all kinds of provocation. He allows himself to be severely affected by even small irritations. His spirit is like a city that has all kinds of enemies coming and going as they please and leaving destruction in their wake.

☀ Prov 14:17. Q. How does someone act who has a quick temper?

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A man who loses his temper makes a fool of himself. He shows others that he has no control over his emotions. His outburst may last only a few moments, but his reputation for behaving foolishly takes much longer to fade.

♣ Think. *Have you witnessed someone severely lose their temper? What did you think of them at that time?*

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☀ Proverbs 22:24-25. Q. What should you *not do* with an angry or furious man? Why Not?

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The above proverbs teach us that a quick tempered man is *inferior* (16:32), *foolish* (14:17), and *friendless* (22:24-25). On the other hand being slow to anger is a virtue to be praised.

☀ James 1:19. Q. What 3 things does James encourage us to do?

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**Reflect**

Love is not telling someone over and over again how sorry you are that you lost your temper. It is never losing it to begin with. What attitude *are you showing when you lose your temper with others?*
How many altercations could be avoided if we learned to be quick to listen to what others are saying and slow to offer our opinion? Listening to others involves understanding their position or seeing things from their perspective. Love is quick to consider what others are saying and slow to speak its mind.

It may be that we have suffered a legitimate hurt or offense. Are we then justified in responding with anger? Proverbs 19:11 tells us, *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.* The word “defer” here brings with it the idea of “prolonging.” As we have already learned, love is longsuffering, but more than that, the loving person is able to overlook offenses committed by those whom he loves (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

**8. Love is Sparing - 1 Corinthians 13:5 Charity thinketh no evil...**

The Greek word *logizomai* translated here “thinks no evil” can actually mean “to take an inventory.” Many marriages and other relationships fail because one or both parties carry with them a history or an inventory of unforgiven hurts. 1 Corinthians 13:5 indicates that the loving person is not resentful and does not keep a record of wrongs committed against them.

This is the type of forgiveness that God offers to us (Rom 4:8; 2 Cor 5:19). It is a love that not only forgives and forgets, but forgives and deliberately chooses not to recollect past hurts (Ps 103:12). What else leads to bitterness and resentment but repeatedly dwelling on past hurts?

**Philippians 4:8.** Q. We also find the word *logizomai* (think) in this verse. If we are not to drum up and dwell on past hurts, what types of things should we think on? (8)

1. ____________________________________________ 2. ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________ 4. ____________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________ 6. ____________________________________________

7. ____________________________________________ 8. ____________________________________________

Think. What are some tell-tale signs that someone is keeping an inventory of past hurts?

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9. Love is Sympathetic - 1 Corinthians 13:6 Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity...

Love does not “rejoice in iniquity.” That is, love does not celebrate the sins of others. It is not pleased when others fail or fall. Proverbs 24:17 tells us that we should not even rejoice when our enemies fall.

Proverbs 24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him. (see Job 31:29)

Proverbs 17:5. Q. Who will not go unpunished?

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The Germans have a word for this, it is schadenfreude. It literally means to obtain enjoyment from the troubles of others. One of the clearest examples of this is the gossip. The gossip is one who delights so much in the failures of others that he can’t wait to spread the news. He repeats the story of the sins of others so that he himself can look better. How can we love someone and rejoice when they fail or fall? We can’t. These two attitudes are irreconcilable.

Consider Proverbs 24:17-18 from above. Why do you think God would have the reaction mentioned in verse 18 if we rejoice when our enemies fall?

Think. In your own words, how should we respond when others fail? (see Galatians 6:1)

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10. Love is Sound - 1 Corinthians 13:6 Charity rejoiceth in the truth...

There are many who falsely claim that there is a conflict between love and truth. They say things like “doctrine doesn’t matter as long as we love one another.” They are willing to compromise just about anything “in the name of love.” What the Bible teaches us is that true love does not tolerate untruth or unsound doctrine. True love rejoices in truth.
2 Thess 2:10. Q. This verse is speaking of those unsaved people who will be deceived by the anti-Christ. According to this verse how might they have been saved?

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God is a God of truth (Deu 32:4), Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6), the Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth and guides us into all truth (John 14:17; John 16:13), the word of God is truth (John 17:17), and those who worship God must do it in spirit and truth (John 4:24). It is no wonder then that in 2 Thess 2:10, “receiving the love of the truth” is used synonymously with being saved. Everyone who has ever been saved has been because they have received the love of the truth. Therefore, the Christian life will evidence a love for the truth, and a continuation in it (John 8:31).

Think. If we love the truth, what will our attitude be toward sin and error?

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True love does not allow someone to continue in error if it will damn their souls (1 Cor 5:5). It does not overlook false doctrine in the name of “love”, but it will lovingly confront sin and error (Eph 4:15; 2 Tim 2:25). All of our relationships in the church are bound together by a common love for the truth (2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1).

11. Love Suffers - 1 Corinthians 13:6 Charity beareth all things...

There is a burden to bear with love, because it always costs to love. The moment we decide to love, we make ourselves vulnerable and open to hurt. This is why some people put up a wall of protection and choose not to love. God knew this when he gave man the capacity to sin. In order to love, man was given a will, and with the gift of a will, God made it possible for he himself to suffer hurt. When God chose to love, God chose to suffer.

Isaiah 53:4-5. Q. What did Christ “bear” for us?

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Q. Why was he wounded? __________________________________________________________________

Q. Why was he bruised? __________________________________________________________________

Q. Why was he chastised? __________________________________________________________________

Q. Why did he receive stripes? __________________________________________________________________
True love is willing to cover and protect (but not excuse) those who have sinned even if it means suffering on their behalf. As we have already learned, true love does not rejoice in or gossip about the failures of others; rather, it is willing to bear the hurt caused by the sins of those we love.

The word used here for bear literally means “to roof over.” Like a roof that covers and protects, bearing the burden of the elements, love protects those who have sinned and repented. Out of concern for their wellbeing love is willing to bear the brunt of sin.

Gal 6:1-2. Q. How will we fulfill the law of Christ?

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Q. Considering verse 1, what do you think these “burdens” are referring to?

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Every one of us has particular sins that are especially troubling to us (Heb 12:1). True love does not see the sins of others and judge or condemn them. It hurts for them and seeks to find ways to help them to overcome that sin.

Romans 15:1-3. Q. v1. What should the strong do for the weak?

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Q. v2. Why would we do this?

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Q. v3. In doing so, what example are we following?

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Jesus Christ bore our sins for us on the cross and in doing so He left for us an example of perfect love (1 Pet 2:24; 1 John 4:10). Obviously, we are not bearing sin in the same sense that Christ did. Nevertheless, true love bears the sins of others by showing mercy, by bearing the hurts that result from their sins, and by overlooking their failures. All of this is for the purpose of promoting their spiritual growth (Rom 15:2).
Think. How might this aspect of love be especially necessary for a Pastor or one who is discipling younger Christians to learn?

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James 5:19. Q. Bearing sin is not excusing sin. James here is giving a scenario of a man in the church who is showing a lack of salvation by continuing in sin. According to verse 19, what does this man need?

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Q. According to verse 20, what two things happen when someone is “converted from the error of his ways?”

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The word “hide” here is the very same word used in 1 Cor 13 for “bear.” Love, far from judging the unsaved, leads us to seek the salvation of men and women so that their sins can be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Love hates sin but seeks to convert the sinner.

12. Love is not Suspicious - 1 Corinthians 13:7 Charity believeth all things...

When the Bible says that love “believes all things” it is not speaking of blind or naïve belief. The idea is to consistently think the best of other people without cynicism or suspicion. It is an unloving spirit that assumes the worst of others or is skeptical of their motives.

Think. What might lead us to be skeptical of others?
If we find ourselves skeptical or assuming the worst of someone, because of a past sin or offense, then we may be revealing an unforgiving spirit that resides in our heart. This cynicism is actually a defense mechanism, protecting ourselves from a repeat of some hurt that we have experienced before. This cynicism is not in line with what we have already learned about love. Love “bears all things.” That is, it is willing to suffer and to bear with the sins and failures of others. It lovingly endures the pain that the vulnerability of love brings. The same love that bears the sins of others also seeks to think the best of others even at the risk of being proven wrong. It does not become cynical because of past hurts or disappointments.

An unloving heart is quick to ascribe ill motives to the actions of others. It assumes the worst instead of erring on the side of trust. It may be that this trust at some point is broken, but again, the nature of love is that it is willing to bear with that disappointment and to continue to love.

Luke 7:36-39. Q. How is the woman described here? ________________________________________________

This woman had a reputation in her city as a “sinner.” She was probably a well-known prostitute.

Q. What did she bring with her into the Pharisee’s house?

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Q. How does Mark 14:3 describe this ointment?

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Q. v38. Luke tells us that the woman was W________________________

Q. v38. What did the woman do while she was weeping?

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Q. What this woman has done is a beautiful picture of faith, humility, repentance and worship (v50), but not everyone saw it this way. What did the Pharisee think when he saw this?

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This Pharisee assumed that had Christ known this woman’s reputation he would have rebuked her. The Pharisee’s first and only thought was that this woman was not coming in a spirit of faith or repentance, but with ill will. It did not enter into his mind that she might actually have come in repentance, with the desire to give her life over to Jesus Christ the Messiah.
After the Pharisee “spake within himself”, Christ “answered.” He knew the thoughts in the heart of the Pharisee and rebuked him for them. This reminds us that it is Christ and Christ alone who can see the hearts of men and who can discern their motives. The Pharisee saw the woman, remembered her reputation and judged her wrongly. For us who cannot read minds or thoughts, we are to err on the side of trust and believe the motives and intentions of others are pure, until proven otherwise. If we are proven wrong then we are to seek to forgive and restore that brother and then to keep on loving.

> Love assumes the best, bears with the worst, restores the offender and continues loving.

**13. Love Does Not Surrender - 1 Corinthians 13:7 Charity hopeth all things...**

Not only does love bear with the sins of others and assume the best of others but even when sins persist and trust is broken, it continues to love and hopes for the return or restoration of the erring brother.

An unloving heart is quick to give up on others. It is quick to pronounce that someone is “getting what they deserve”, or to write them off forever.

2 Peter 3:9. **Q.** What attitude does God have toward us? Why?

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As long as God’s love and grace continues toward men, we should not give up on others. We love them and pray for them. We pray that God would grant them repentance, that they would come to (or be restored to) the faith. In short, true love does not “give up” on anyone.

**14. Love Stands - 1 Corinthians 13:7 Charity endureth all things...**

In summary, love “endures all things.” It does not fail, no matter what it encounters. The word here is the same used for Christ as he “endured the cross” (Heb 12:2). Christ’s love enabled him to willingly endure the torture of the cross for those whom he loved.

When we choose to love others (in obedience to God’s command, Mark 12:31; 1 Pet 1:22) we make a forever commitment. Love is not a fleeting emotion but a rigid, unmoving and purposeful commitment. It refuses to let go even when it encounters hurts and disappointments.

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Can you think of someone that you used to pray for or encourage but have since stopped? If you love that person what should you continue to do?

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Think about everything you have learned about love. How does your love measure up? How about your love toward your spouse? Toward fellow believers?
Conclusion

Love is an all-important attitude that should saturate the Christian heart. All our actions and words should be seasoned with love.

When we accept the primacy of love and learn to apply the personality of love we reflect the character of God and evidence the fact that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. This is not an easy thing to do in a society that exalts pride and perverts love. But, as we learn more about God’s loving character and grow in the faith, it becomes increasingly easy.

If you find yourself lacking in love, dwell on God’s love for you. Meditate on the greatest act of love - Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross for you. Consider the character of God and then look for opportunities to show His love to others.
Review: Love

1. What are some things that God the Father and Jesus Christ have done for us through love?

2. Why do you think other gifts of the Spirit, if not seasoned with love, become useless?

3. What is a scenario in which love could show itself "long suffering?"

4. How does the "kindness" of love impact the way we should interact with non-Christians?

5. What does being envious of others say about our contentment with God's provision for us?

6. When do envy and hate overlap?

7. In what ways is pride incompatible with love?

8. Love does not behave rudely. What are some basic areas of consideration that you would appreciate as expressions of love toward you?

9. The loving person is not overly concerned with his "rights." What are some rights that we should be willing to forego for the benefit of others?

10. How might remembering that "love thinketh no evil" help us in our marriages?

11. How do we know that a person who gossips is unloving?

12. Love is willing to bear the consequences of the sins of others. If you love someone who sins, and others judge or condemn that person, how might you respond?

13. Explain "Love is not cynical."

14. How does a loving person treat someone who has drifted away from the faith?

15. Is there any particular characteristic of love that you feel you need to work on? How do you think you could go about this?