

“How long will your love endure?”

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 NASB

“Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, ⁶ does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

People ask how long it takes me to prepare a sermon.

That it takes a certain number of hours, I can't say.
I don't punch a time-clock.

As Norma can tell you, I'm usually in my office working by 8:30 AM and often spend several mornings, and many afternoons and evenings, researching and preparing.

An area minister once told me that he prepares his sermons on Thursday evenings.

One can find thousands of sermons on-line.

On most texts and subjects, anyone can go on-line and find a homily.

Though I constantly look for illustrations, I've never wanted to preach someone else's sermon.

That appeals to me about as much as having boiled parsnips for dessert.

Other people ask, “Can't you pull out an old Hollywood sermon; and dust it off?”

I kept copies of nearly all sermons I preached since about 1965.

I often look to see what I've previously said on the subject.

I have notes on a 1 Corinthians 13:7 Hollywood sermon I preached in 1969.

For that lesson, I researched the words in I Corinthians 13:7.



For some reason, I missed a word in that verse.

Last Sunday evening before I went to sleep, I was looking at the text in my Greek New Testament.

Paul used four verbs in this verse, each preceded by the word translated “always” or “all things.”

The Greek terms for believes, hopes, and endures were familiar to me.

But that first word translated *bears* in “bears all things” stumped me.

It's a fairly rare word.

Greek dictionaries state that it's sometimes translated as “endures.”

That's why many versions translate it as “**Bears all things,**” which is much the same as “*endures.*”

But why would Paul use synonyms in a verse this important?

Paul evidently preached some lengthy sermons.

At an evening service in a city called Troas, *Acts* tell us that Paul preached “on and on till midnight.”

The church met on the third floor of a building.

The many oil lamps used to light the room likely sucked all the oxygen from that upstairs area.

A young man named Eutychus sat in a window and grew sleepy as Paul continued. Eutychus fell to his death.



They had an exciting “raising the dead ceremony” before Eutychus, Paul and all went back upstairs to have their communion service.

Paul apparently preached long sermons at times.¹

But when writing, Paul didn’t waste words.

I don’t think he duplicated any thoughts in our text.

By what did he mean when he used this rare word in our text?

Look at the variations in the first of these four verbs in 1 Corinthians 13: 7:

1. NIV “It always protects . . .”

2. The Message - “Puts up with anything . . .”

3. New Living Translation-“Love never gives up . . .”

4. F.W Grosheide in *New International Commentary*, “To bear” or “to cover with silence.”

As these versions and commentary show, there’s a significant difference.

For an important reason, the Holy Spirit wanted Paul to include this verb in 13:7.

But what does this term mean?

The mystery deepened for me when I checked the word in the *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* prepared by Barclay M. Newman, Jr.

That dictionary states that the noun form of this verb Paul used means “roof.”

English-speaking people recognize that the noun *roof* describes “the upper covering part of a building.”

That’s *roof* in noun form.

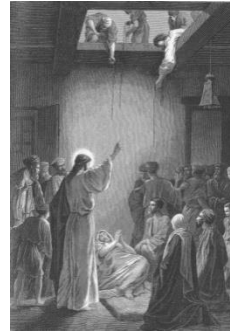
One can also use *roof* as a verb:

“That company will *roof* my house.”

¹See Acts 20: 7-12 re: this incident. Paul didn’t waste words in preaching. Knowing he might have only one chance to tell someone about Jesus, he spoke passionately.

Most church goers have heard how four men helped a paralytic who wanted Jesus to heal him. At the time, Jesus was inside a house which was packed with people listening to him teach.

The four fellows carried the paralytic to the roof, cut a hole in it and lowered the fellow right in front of Jesus.



In the Gospel of Mark account of this incident, the term translated *roof* is the noun form of the verb we’re trying to understand today in 1 Cor. 13:7.

In reporting another event, Matthew and Luke use this *roof* term to describe a house covering.

In the NT, only Paul used this word in verb form, and he employed it just four times.

Our 1 Corinthians 13:7 text is one of the four.

You should know about one more source.

A German scholar named Wilhelm Kasch studied our term and wrote this in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: **“To be recommended . . . is the translation “covers all things” . . . The idea of covering all things with the cloak of love accords well with it . . . specifically as to ‘keep silent about all things’ (which it might be harmful to others to utter).”**²

² Wilhelm Kasch, regarding *στέγω*, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. VII, pp. 586, 587

In case this detailed word investigation wearies you, let me share a few examples of how this *covering* idea works.

You know what gossip is.

Gossip usually includes rumors and information hurtful to other people—that injures another’s reputation.

“You know what I just heard?”

“The grapevine is saying this . . .”

“You won’t believe what she just told me.”

“Sounds just like him.”

Covering is the opposite of gossip.

When Norma and I first attended the Hollywood church in 1957, I had just begun working for an oil company on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood.



While driving on Franklin one evening, I saw a prominent church member coming out of a bar.

That man was a substitute teacher of the young adult Sunday AM Bible class.

I wasn’t fond of this man’s teaching style.

For a long, I carried negative feelings toward this man; he seemed “too prim and proper.”

You can find the verb in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the *Septuagint*-“to cover, conceal or keep secret.” Bernard A. Taylor *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*.

Though I heard a few rumors about him, I never said anything to him or others about the incident.

Six year later, Norma and I were involved in the Hollywood ministry and my feelings toward him didn't immediately change.

Over time, however, he proved to be one of the most dependable, wise, caring men in the church.

He and another man regularly treated our sons to doughnuts prior to the evening service.

Our sons looked forward to being with them.

Those two gentlemen listened to the boys when their dad wasn't take time to listen very often.

This man and his wife often took Norma and me out to dinner; both were good listeners.

What if I had told others about seeing this gentleman coming out of a bar?

Despite the early rumors I heard, he never showed evidence of a drinking problem.

I need to share a little “sidebar” regarding bars. In raising money for the YMCA, the people in charge of fundraising assigned me to call on a few bar owners.

Because I didn't have the home addresses of the owners, I had to go into bars to solicit their help.

One bar I entered was on the sleazy side.

Compared to that bar, the one I saw the church member exit was high-classed one.

Had I followed the procedure Jesus tells us to practice in Matthew 18, I would have spoken to the man privately as soon as possible. You know the possible answers he could have given:

- **“I was there for about an hour trying to get my neighbor to quit drinking and go home.”**
- **I went there to pay my bar bill; I've totally stopped drinking and I haven't been back.**
- **“Bob, you definitely saw me, but I went to get a contribution for the Hollywood YMCA.”**

Suppose he had confessed to an alcohol problem. The Lord wants me to love as in 1 Corinthians 13:7. I would have to put a “roof” on (covered) any negative info I had about my brother in Christ.



Godly love keeps “silent about all things’ (which it might be harmful to others to utter).”

Christ's love wants everyone saved and to be in close relationship with God.

Satan constantly tries to divide us and to interrupt the brotherhood of believers.

Gossip divides.

We not only have gossips; now people use their iPhones to record the supposed sins of others.

They rarely include the full context in their photo snippets, so innocent people suffer.

Social media giants apparently suppress truth not to their liking.

God's people avoid saying or doing things that hinder the progress of another toward heaven or that divide the body of Christ.

To interfere with another person's relationships with God and His church is to meddle.

The Bible has harsh word for gossips, busybodies and meddlers.

The Lord classes them with the worst sinners:

"If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler," (1 Peter 4:15 NIV).

"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family . . . Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you . . ." 1Thess 4: 9-11 NIV.

1 Timothy 5:13 NIV of certain people:

"They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to."

Doesn't that describe much of daytime television?

The Lord calls us to be different from the world. General William Westmoreland was once reviewing a platoon of paratroopers in Vietnam. As he went down the line, he asked each of them a question: "How do you like jumping, son?" "Love it, sir!" was the first answer. "How do you like jumping?" he asked the next. "The greatest experience in my life, sir!" exclaimed the paratrooper. "How do you like jumping?" he asked the third. "I hate it, sir," he replied. "Then why do you do it?" asked Westmoreland. **"Because I want to be around guys who love to jump."**



As every parent knows, true love takes devoted effort.

It'll be great to jump with joy when Jesus returns because we've been around people who love God.

"Above all, have fervent *and* unfailing love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins [it overlooks unkindness and unselfishly seeks the best for others]." 1 Peter 4:8 Amplified ©Bible

"Love covers all things (that might harm another person's relationship with God) **believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."**

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