

## LOVE PERSEVERES

Scripture used: [1 Corinthians 13:7 \(NIV\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

God's love is the highest expression of love. It is unconditional and sacrificial. We're looking for that kind of affirming love in every one of our meaningful relationships. We are called to embody the love that we seek. We are called to live out the expression of God's love, which is to elevate and prioritize others. While life may be unfair, God's love calls us to persevere in doing good, in believing that God is able to do more than we can ask or imagine, and in prayer. Persevering in love in this way keeps us open and ready to participate in God's plan.

### KEY POINTS

1. God's love does not give up on us. In the same way, we should not allow problems in our loved ones' lives to make us lose sight of their God-given potential. Yes, we need healthy boundaries. But we also must keep trusting that God can move in people's lives. God's love shows up when we need it most. We can reap the harvest of blessing if we don't give up.
2. Consider Adam Ruiz, a chaplain in Louisville KY, who was physically and emotionally exhausted during the height of the COVID crisis. He had lost the capacity to serve until he focused on remarkable examples of people doing good, people being courageous and compassionate, around him. For instance, he encountered a 9-month-pregnant pharmacist running around the ICU, saying: "This [saving lives] is worth the running for." Consider [Galatians 6:10 \(NLT\)](#): God's love calls us to do good to everyone, and we can start with the people closest to us, in the here and now, with a goal to scale beyond that. God believes in us; and gives us the capacity to believe in ourselves, to keep on believing against the odds, and never lose faith.
3. We are also asked to consider the remarkable partnership of Susan Jane Brown and Mark Webb - respectively an environmental lawyer and a logger in Grant County, Oregon. Their shared faith as followers of Jesus allowed them to find common-ground, to empathize with one another even when coming at an issue from different perspectives, and to find solutions to ensure both the preservation of God's creation and the economic well-being of the people in the community.
4. Finally, we are invited to consider Betty Kilby Baldwin and Phoebe Baldwin - who met through a genealogical test. They were related through the legacy of sexual exploitation of slaves by slave owners in the antebellum era. Betty (who is Black) bore the scars of school integration, beatings, rape. At 62 years old, she responded to a message from her long-lost white cousin, and God did a unique work of healing, resulting in a powerful shared ministry of reconciliation. God's love allows us to persevere through difficult times, moments, and relationships, and to allow His redeeming work to be done.
5. God is doing supernatural work in our lives. Thus we should not put our trust in our resources or intellect, but in the indwelling and overflowing of the Holy Spirit. We can open the eyes of our opponents - it begins with us. We must keep believing in the improbable grace of God, and persevere in doing good, believing that God is able, and praying through our challenges.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What difficult calling or challenge in your life have you been able to persevere through the most? Where has the strength to persevere come from? What areas of life have been the hardest to persevere through?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read [1 Corinthians 13:7 \(NIV\)](#). We often encounter this passage at weddings. But what is the context of this passage in 1 Corinthians? Is this love something for a marriage, or is it the kind of love that is intended for all people, especially communities of faith, to have for one another? Where does perseverance come from? Does it come from willpower, or does it come from being motivated internally by a transformative experience that shapes what we most value and desire?
- 3) **DO** - Consider whether persevering in love for you this week means taking a step in the area of doing good, believing in God's ability (asking God to increase your faith), or prayer for another person.