

Love Vs. Abandonment, 1 Corinthians 13:7-13, 6/17/18 "5 Ways to Be an All-in Father"

1 Corinthians 13:7-8a

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails.

This last section of 1 Corinthians 13 I like to call "All-in" love. Paul talks about love in extremes to emphasize the unconditional aspect of love. Which is why this last message is **Love Vs. Abandonment**. God's love is unconditional, unrelenting and permanent...counter-cultural to the distorted version we see in our world today which is quick to abandon, give up, find an exit.

While we could apply these truths in many different areas of life, today I want to talk more specifically to the fathers, whether you are a future father, in the thick of it right now, or you are the father of adult children. Don't check out if that's not you- single ladies, these qualities are what you should be looking for, married women- these are the qualities that you should encourage and pray for in your husband, all of us- these are qualities of our heavenly Father in his love toward you and qualities we all should strive to exhibit in our most important relationships.

I told my 8 and 11 year old sons that I was preaching a message about fatherhood. I said tell me what is some advice I should give the dads on how to be an "All-in Father." Nathan- play a lot with them, teach them how to do things even when they don't want to learn, Love them for who they are not what you want them to be, give them an allowance, but don't give them everything they want....Aidan chimed in "but make sure you get them a pet hedgehog!" Some good advice they gave. Let's look at a few qualities from Scripture-

From verses 7-13 we see **5 Ways to be an All-In Father**

1) Protect those under your Roof

v. 7a Love always protects (NIV), Bears all things (ESV)

Root word- stega- A **roof of a house**. The image is a roof that protects those under it from the harsh and damaging elements. It does this by bearing up, taking the brunt of it so that those under its protection don't have to. This word picture points directly to Jesus. Isaiah 52- The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He took the brunt of our sin on the cross, bearing the weight of our sin so that we would not have to. He protected us from the corruption and condemnation of sin before a holy God. Love always takes a posture of protection toward those under its roof.

Fathers, one of our key roles is to protect those under our roof from the damaging elements of this world. Certainly this protection is physical safety. You should do your best to make sure your household is a safe place. But its also spiritual because there is a spiritual battle that is taking place in every one of our households. The enemy would love to slowly and subtly infiltrate the leaky shingles and rafters of

your household. Let me give you some specific places where we may need to check for leaks and replace some shingles...

-Rules in the household- How is God's Word shaping the culture of your household. How do you treat each other? Is it a place where respect, honor and love are upheld? Is it a place where conflict is resolved and forgiveness reigns? Language? Curfews? Are there consistent and agreed upon disciplines?

-Social Media and Entertainment influences- When I was a teenager the phrase social media didn't exist! For some of you media was sitting around the radio listening to the Long Ranger. In today's culture, parents you cannot afford to be aloof. You need to know what social media platforms they are on and you may need to restrict access. Do you know that on snapchat- you can send a wildly inappropriate picture and it disappears after a few seconds? Fathers, are and your wife having conversations about what to allow? What movies and shows to watch? www.commonensemedia.com This goes for grandparents to, when they come over to visit are you aware of what they can access? What kind of access to the internet they can have? Filters? Your kids are going to say- "But EVERYONE else is allowed _____" Not true. And so what? You might not be super popular and "besties" with your kids sometimes. They may think you aren't as cool of a grandpa as you would like to be. But you are their parents and grandparents first!

-Teach Wisdom- One of the most important things you can do is teach your children discernment. You won't always be there to protect them. They will need to be prepared to make God honoring decisions. They will need to be prepared to live like exiles, like Daniel and Joseph and Esther among a culture that is increasingly hostile toward the things of God. Do you know what is being taught in your kid's school? Do you know how to create a safe environment with your kids to talk about sticky questions? About sex and sexuality? About integrity when no one is looking? About pressures that they will face? Overwhelmed- www.focusonthefamily.com is a good starting place.

2) Model A Steady Faith

v.7b Love always trusts.

I heard a popular preacher talk about this phrase and say that it means we should always assume that best of others and trust them. And we should be people whose inclination is toward assuming the best and trusting people. Is this passage telling us to be naïve and always trust everyone's intentions and actions, even if there is lots of evidence to the contrary? I don't think so.

John 2:24 But Jesus did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people.

Apparently Jesus didn't always trust people. Why? Because he knew they were not trustworthy. So then what does it mean that love always trusts? The question is in the object of trust. I believe what Paul is saying here is that the object of trust is God. I believe Paul is calling us to trust the one who is ultimately trustworthy in all his promises.

Psalm 118:8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.

John 14:1 *Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.*

Fathers- we must model a steady faith that trusts God, not our own strength. Not our own wisdom. Trust in the promises of God for your family. A faith that is not easily rattled by disappointments or trials. Do your children see you in your Bible and in prayer? Do they hear you quoting from the Bible about God's promises? Ex: from my dad- Provision from the Lord. Rarely a morning that I didn't see him with his laminated prayer card and Bible open. This kind of faith is caught more than taught. My prayer card lives on my computer...

3) Take the Long view

v.7c Love always hopes

Like the object of our faith, the question is what is the object of our hope? I don't believe Paul is saying that we are to blindly put our hope in others. "I hope my kids turn out ok, I hope they don't disappoint me" Listen- As fathers, one of the most damaging things we can do is make our children the object of our hope. Making our children's success or status or ability to live up to our expectations.... To live vicariously through them in a way that they might fulfill or validate us. That is a quick way to crush your children. And it is idolatrous because your kids can't bear the weight of your hopes for your own fulfillment. But the object of our hope for our children, for our lives, for our future must be God. And specifically the hope we have in God is eschatological; that is- trusting that what God has begun he will bring to completion. That God has our future and our children's futures in his hand. Paul talks about this hope in the context of the coming renewal of all things at the return of Christ.

Romans 8:24-25

For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Fathers- let me encourage you to take the long view when it comes to parenting and instilling faith in your kids. An easy way to get discouraged is at any given moment to measure your success as a parent based on current behavior, your kids current sense of God in their lives, their current beliefs. Hope means praying for your children- entrusting them to God for their future. That God is sovereign and can turn the hearts of your children toward him if they aren't currently walking with him. This leads us right into #4...

4) Develop true grit

v.7d Love always perseveres.

Love never gives up. Love doesn't have quit, it has grit. It doesn't abandon but sees things through to the end, through the mountaintops and the swamps. Jesus modeled this for us.

John 13:1

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

This is the unconditional nature of the love of God that is at the center of the gospel promise in Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In our culture, there are a lot of exits off the road of enduring love.

Channing and Jenna Tatum-

We have lovingly chosen to separate as a couple. We fell deeply in love so many years ago and have had a magical journey together. Absolutely nothing has changed about how much we love one another, but love is a beautiful adventure that is taking us on different paths. There are no secrets nor salacious events at the root of our decision — just two best-friends realizing it our journeys end, so we can help each other live the most joyous, fulfilled lives as possible.

Fathers- Developing grit means working through conflicts with your spouse. It means committing to each other when things get tough and you experience hurt or disillusionment. When there are seasons that feel like they are swampy... sticking it out. Seeking help for your marriage when you hit a rough spot. Being proactive to not settle for an OK marriage, this is one of the greatest gifts you can give you children! This Fall we are going to pilot **Re|Engage**

With your children it means having your children see consistency. You don't give up on disciplining because it doesn't seem like it's working right away. You don't give up on your kids because they don't seem like they want to talk to you right now. That you don't give up on devotions or family prayer because your kids are having a hard time paying attention. I'm preaching to myself on this- sometimes it is hard to stay motivated when there is kicking under the table... Most weeknights we had devotions around the table.

5) Prioritize Relationships

v.8-13 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Verses 8-13, we can get bogged down in over-analyzing this passage, but Paul in context is making one main point- While spiritual gifts are temporary, love is permanent. Love is like a bridge from this world into the next. The Corinthians were acting as if what was most important was exercising their spiritual gifts. They were prioritizing the sharpening of their gifts, elevation of their status, meanwhile their love was remaining dull. And Paul is saying, you have it exactly backwards. See love is the only thing that lasts through this life into eternity. We won't need prophecy and wisdom and knowledge gifts in heaven. In fact we won't even need faith and hope...Right now we walk by faith, but then we will walk by sight. Love is greatest because it encapsulates what eternity will be- love.

And so my exhortation to you as fathers- **prioritize loving relationships** with your spouse and your children. Cultivate your relationship with them above cultivating their talents, their academic prowess, a task list of things you want them to achieve. Do they have a tangible sense that your acceptance of them does not hinge on their performance or what they accomplish or how they measure up? Tell them how proud you are of them. How much you love them. How nothing could change that. Tell them specifically areas of their lives that encourage you. For every criticism give 10 encouragements. Find ways to just play...Get on their level. Laugh. Get on the trampoline. Get into a pillow fight. Play a video game. Play dolls. Read to them and with them. Take them to breakfast. Go see a game together. Love is the bridge from childhood to adulthood to have lasting relationships.

5 Ways to be an "All-In" Father

- 1) Protect those under your Roof**
- 2) Model A Steady Faith**
- 3) Take the Long view**
- 4) Develop true grit**
- 5) Prioritize Relationships**

Enews this week- 25 practical ways to live out these 5 truths of 1 Corinthians 13. Let me encourage you guys- the greatest thing you can do for your children- show them the gospel. You aren't going to do this perfectly and you are going to fail, and you will fail sometimes miserably. This is why we need a savior who was perfect in our place. Point them to the perfect father.