

“Love endures all things all things” 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 7

Endures all things? Really? I can think of many things that I would be very unlikely to endure. But, of course, we are talking about what the love of God enables us to endure, not our own human love and strength.

I remember reading, in the early years of my life as a Christian, the account of a believer in one of the communist states who was arrested and imprisoned for his faith. One winter he was forced to stand outside in sub zero temperatures in little more than his underwear. The guards in their winter uniforms and greatcoats were shivering in the cold, but he reported remaining warm throughout.

There are many other accounts of Christians who have, it seems, received supernatural power to endure under hardships, persecution and even martyrs' deaths.

But, you may say, is it not also the case that many Christians have proved not able to endure in all sorts of difficult and dangerous situations? Haven't many of them given up under the pressure? We don't hear much about them, do we?

Well, that's true, and I don't have a catch-all explanation for why some Christians endure and others don't. But I do know that it has to do with living in and from God's love rather than our own. Perhaps God doesn't always provide supernatural strength to endure. He is not beholden to us for what he does and does not do, and nor is he duty bound to explain his actions to us. We are always on shaky ground when we make assumptions about what God will always or will never do.

But I do know that, where a Christian is rooted in loving relationship with God and drawing his or her strength from God's love and not their own human resources, God can and frequently does miraculously uphold and deliver them and, where there is no miraculous intervention, our knowledge that God is able to make everything work for our best good is a powerful incentive for us to persevere.

Prayer.

Father, thank you that your almighty power, the power which called the universe into being, the power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, is exercised on our behalf in everything that we are called to endure in this life, up to and including death. Please help me to root my life firmly in your love, so that I can rely on your divine power in suffering, difficulty and danger. In Jesus' name, amen.

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