**Loving Our Neighbors**

**The Characteristics of Love**

**Love Believes All Things**

1. Implementing our soul care initiatives to achieve deeper friendships within our church family.

2. As individual church members, growing in our ability to build stronger relationships with those who live right around us.

3. As a church family, developing our "parish mentality" to especially serve those who live near our two ministry campuses.

4. Launching our Faith Community Development Corporation to serve urban neighborhoods with excellence.

5. Constructing the first phase of our Senior Living Community.

**I. A Few Examples of Hatred Not Believing All Things**

A. Choosing to think the worst about a person's circumstances

**Job 1:1** - *There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*

**Job 15:1-6** - *Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge and fill himself with the east wind? Should he argue with useless talk, or with words which are not profitable? Indeed, you do away with reverence and hinder meditation before God. For your guilt teaches your mouth, and you choose the language of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; and your own lips testify against you.”*

**Job 42:7-9** - *It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.” So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord told them; and the Lord accepted Job.*

B. Choosing to think the worst about a person's actions

**Luke 5:21** - *The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”*

C. Choosing to think the worst about a person's motivations

“…judgmentalism is merciless. Whereas love ‘believes all things’ (1 Corinthians 13:7, NASB), the judgmental person disbelieves all things. He presumes the worst. He reads evil into the most innocent of actions. He impugns motives. He refuses to give others the benefit of the doubt. Judgmentalism is the opposite of the magnanimous, big-souled person. A judgmental person is certainly not a true disciple or follower of Christ and might not be a Christian at all.” (R. Kent Hughes, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, p. 240)

**Romans 14:1, 4** - *Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions…Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.*

**II. The Meaning of Love Believes All Things**

A. From the lexical definition of the word "believe"

‘to believe’ [Herm, HNTC, LN (31.35), Lns, NTC; KJV, NET, NRSV], ‘to believe the best in’ [ISV], ‘to have faith in’ [LN (31.85); TNT], ‘to trust’ [LN (31.85); NIV, NJB], ‘to be trustful’ [ICC], ‘to have confidence in’ [LN (31.85)], ‘to be loyal’ [CEV], ‘to maintain faithfulness’ [AB], ‘to believe in’ [BAGD, LN (31.85)], ‘to be convinced of something’ [BAGD]. The phrase πάντα πιστεύω ‘believes all things’ is translated ‘(its) faith never fails’ [TEV], ‘there is no limit to (its) faith/trust’ [NAB, REB], ‘(love) never loses faith’ [NIGTC; NLT].

B. Help from key writers

1. Sees the best in others

“’Always trusts’ points to the quality that is ever ready to allow for circumstances and to see the best in others (cf. Moffatt, ‘always eager to believe the best’). This does not mean that love is gullible, but that it does not think the worst (as is the way of the world).” (Leon Morris, 1 Corinthians, p. 179)

2. Is willing to risk giving others the benefit of the doubt

“Love believeth all things—not that the Christian knowingly and willingly allows himself to be imposed upon—not that he divests himself of prudence and judgment, that he may be the more easily taken advantage of—not that he unlearns the way of distinguishing black from white. What then? He requires here, as I have already said, simplicity and kindness in judging of things; and he declares that these are the invariable accompaniments of love. The consequence will be, that a Christian man will reckon it better to be imposed upon by his own kindness and easy temper, than to wrong his brother by an unfriendly suspicion.” (John Calvin, Corinthians, p. 425)

C. Avoids being needlessly suspicious

**Proverbs 18:21** - *Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

D. Avoids being cynical

**III. Key Ways You Can Practice This Aspect of God's Word**

A. By choosing to believe God's Word

**John 20:24-25** - *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”*

 **John 20:29** - *Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”*

B. By choosing to focus on a person's potential right choices

**Luke 22:31-32** - *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*

**Ephesians 4:29** - *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

C. By erring on the side of grace