

Love against the odds

Is this a gift or an order?

...the measure of the love you are given,
or the love you are asked to give?

Love, it seems, is always at odds with the struggles and trials of life. It's at odds with distrust, with prejudice, with ignorance, with fear, with envy....

Yet love can also overcome all of that with an intensity and a resolve which can be painful.

Children can sometimes see love more clearly than adults:

- **For better or worse:** *When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toe nails anymore. So Grandad does it for her now, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love!* *Rebecca age 8*
- **Warts and all!** *Love is like a little old man and a little old woman who are still friends even after they know each other so well.* *Tommy age 6*
- **Against the grain:** *If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.* *Nikka aged 8*
- **Priceless:** *Love is...tepid tea and a soggy biscuit placed tenderly by our bed at 6.30am so that I don't have to get up early on my birthday.* *A mother.*

Jesus loved against the odds. Love is when God accepts all our anger and hatred, and still wants to welcome us home with open arms.

We are made in God's image – and all He ever asks of us is to reflect His love to those around us... even against all odds... to those who annoy us... the people we disapprove of... to the 'undeserving' and even to our sworn enemies.

Of course, we know this – and we also know our inability to meet God's expectations – we don't need to be told ... yet now and then it helps to be reminded ... to stop and think before we judge.

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down.
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.** *Charles Wesley*

