

Empty Obnoxious Loser “Christian”

1 Corinthians, Vol. 25

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1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Before we get to the outline, we need to deal with an interesting phrase in our text. It has been twisted in our modern world, so it's important to take the time to sort it out.

1 Corinthians 13:1: *If I speak with **the tongues of men and of angels**, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

Seven Evidences That Tongues Are Known Languages

1. **The meaning of *glōssa***. A solid resource respected by all English-speaking Bible scholars is *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine.

Vine's definition fits all the data from the Bible: “*The supernatural gift of speaking in another language without it being learned.*”

2. *Glōssa* is used interchangeably with *dialectos* (dialect) in Acts 2:6-8 to describe the spiritual gift. That could not be true if the gift of tongues is not human languages.
3. There is no exegetical or etymological evidence that there are two different kinds of gifts of tongues (languages and ecstatic speech).
4. **Interpretation** means *translation*. The Greek word *hermēneuō* and its noun form describe *explaining the meaning of words* in a language. Stronger forms of the word include the idea of giving a full explanation similar to our English word **expound**.
5. 1 Corinthians 12:10 and 12:28 mention **kinds** of languages. The word **kind** is *genos* from which we get the English word *genus*. It means *family* or *group*. This would be irrelevant to gibberish, but it's perfect for languages.

6. 1 Corinthians 14:21 is clear that tongues were foreign languages given as a sign to unbelieving Israel.

7. There is a contrast between tongues and ecstatic speech, or a kind of babbling which was common in mystery religion activities in and around Corinth. Ecstatic speech which is unintelligible is Satan's counterfeit of the true spiritual gift of tongues. See the quote from *Tongues of Men and Angels* by William Samarin.

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If means “**even IF I could.**” See insights from 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 14:2-3, and Romans 8:26.

The idea of a special language to be used only in prayer is not in the Bible, and the only mention of praying in tongues in the Bible (which has to mean praying in foreign languages) is in 1 Corinthians 14:14-17, where Paul says **not to do it**.

Our title and outline come from the text.

I. **How to be Spiritually Obnoxious (1)**

1 Corinthians 13:1: *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

Paul likely didn't just make up those analogies. Two false gods worshiped in Corinth were **Cybele** and **Dionysius**. The false worship in their temples included speaking in ecstatic speech (the counterfeit of the gift of tongues) accompanied by clanging cymbals, smashing gongs and blaring trumpets. Many in Corinth would have know of them, and it's likely Paul had them in mind when he wrote the sentence we call verse 1.

II. How to be Spiritually Empty (2)

1 Corinthians 13:2: *If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

Doing things that look spiritual or that make you feel good about yourself, but are not motivated by love, are of no value to the body of Christ. When you speak well or do things that attract attention but are not controlled by love makes you of no value to the body of Christ at the time you do or say those things. Any person in any church doing anything at any time is dead weight to the body of Christ until love controls him or her.

III. How to be a Spiritual Loser (3)

1 Corinthians 13:3: *And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.*

How is it possible to do things that appear loving and sacrificial and do them without love as the motive?

Guilt manipulation

Giving in order to get something in return

Giving in order to be seen by men

Profits me nothing. You accrue ***no spiritual benefit*** in this life and ***no eternal reward*** merely by doing things. If you are not motivated by loving God and therefore wanting to serve those whom He loves, your righteous deeds are like filthy rags.

The kind of love which is the right motivation for acts of service and for using spiritual gifts is love which does what is best for someone else, giving no thought to whether or not there is something in it for you. That's the hallmark of Christianity.

John 13:34–35: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*