

Studies In First Corinthians

(I Corinthians 13:1-13)

1. Was it beneficial to have the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues if it was not coupled with love?

No: *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal"* (I Corinthians 13:1).

- Speaking in tongues had a purpose (I Corinthians 14:21-22).
- Love is a necessary ingredient for all things we do (Galatians 5:6 and I Timothy 1:5).
- In fact, and this is the overall point of this chapter love is above all things (I Peter 4:8). We'll see in chapter fourteen of this epistle that the Corinthians were overly emphasizing spiritual gifts.

2. What did Paul consider himself, even though he was a prophet and could even move mountains, if he did not have love?

Nothing: *"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing"* (I Corinthians 13:2).

- Even with all of the knowledge one can have, without love it is useless (I Corinthians 8:1).
- Again, the emphasis is love (I Corinthians 16:22 and I John 4:8).
- Faith, coupled with spiritual gifts and love, could move mountains (Matthew 21:17-22).

3. What could cause the act of giving to the poor to be unprofitable?

Doing so without love: *"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing"* (I Corinthians 13:3).

- It's good to be willing to help those truly poor (Acts 11:27-30, Romans 15:25-27, and Galatians 2:10).
- It's good to be willing to die for the cause (John 15:13 and Acts 21:8-13).
- Yet, these things too must be motivated by love.

4. Can you claim to be a loving person if you are not longsuffering and kind?

No: *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"* (I Corinthians 13:4).

- Christians are to be kind, longsuffering, and gentle (Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12, II Timothy 2:24-26, Titus 3:1-2, and II Peter 1:5-7).
- Christians are to not be envious (I Peter 2:1-2).

- A Christian does not vaunt [boast] himself (**Ephesians 2:8-10** and **James 4:16**) or puff himself up (**I Corinthians 4:6**).
- That does not mean Christians are to be pushovers (**Ephesians 6:19-20**, **Titus 1:13**, **Titus 2:15**, and **Revelation 2:6**).
- Jesus is our example (**I Peter 2:21-22** and **I John 2:3-6**). He was kind (**Titus 3:4**). Yet, He was not a softy (**Matthew 16:21-23**, **Matthew 17:16-20**, **Matthew 23:13-15**, **Matthew 23:24-26**, **Matthew 23:33**, and **John 2:13-17**).

5. If a Christian really has the love of God, will he or she be selfish?

No: *"Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil"* (**I Corinthians 13:5**).

- Love moves us to not behave unseemly [inappropriately] (**II Thessalonians 3:7**).
- Love moves us to be unselfish (**Romans 15:1-3**, **I Corinthians 10:24**, **Galatians 5:13**, and **Philippians 2:3-9**).
- Love keeps us controlled rather than easily provoked (**Proverbs 16:32**).
- The love of God will keep our minds off of evil (**Romans 12:1-3** and **II Corinthians 10:5**).

6. Does godly love rejoice in iniquity?

No: *"Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"* (**I Corinthians 13:6**).

- Godly love is shown through obedience (**John 14:15** and **I John 5:2-3**).
- God and iniquity are opposites (**I John 1:5-6**).
- If you love God you will HATE evil (**Psalms 97:10**, **Psalms 119:104**, and **Romans 12:9**).
- Rather than iniquity, we will rejoice in things relative to godliness and truth (**II John 4**).

7. Does godly love produce a doubting person who will give up easily?

No: *"Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"* (**I Corinthians 13:7**).

- Love removes carnal fears (**I John 4:18**), works with our faith (**I Thessalonians 5:8**), and is part of our labors of endurance (**Hebrews 6:10**).
- These things work together with love (**I Thessalonians 1:3**).

8. Were spiritual gifts intended to last on earth?

No: *"(8) Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. (9) For we know in part, and we prophesy in part"* (**I Corinthians 13:8-9**).

- Spiritual gifts had a temporary purpose in confirming the word (**Mark 16:15-20**). We now have that perfect word of God revealed and confirmed (**II Timothy 3:16-17** and **II Peter 1:19-21**).
- Those gifts were given by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 19:1-7**).

- The Holy Spirit was given through baptism of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8; 2:1-4** and **Acts 10:44-11:18**), which has ceased (**Ephesians 4:5**).
- The Holy Spirit was also given through the laying on of the Apostles hands (**Acts 8:13-24**). An Apostle had to have been an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (**Acts 1:16-26**). Paul was the last eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (**I Corinthians 15:1-8**).
- Therefore, seeing as how gifts were temporary from the start, we can conclude that spiritual gifts ceased to be passed on with the death of the last Apostle. This occurred thousands of years ago.
- That which is perfect is the revealed word (**James 1:25**).

9. What does the ability to become spiritually mature have to do with spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts concluded when the ability to be spiritually mature came to be: *“(10) But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (11) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. (12) For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known”* (**I Corinthians 13:10-12**).

- This marked the end of spiritual gifts. Now that we have God’s fully revealed word we can grow WITHOUT God’s direct involvement (**Acts 17:10-11, I Peter 2:1-2, and II Peter 3:15-18**).

10. At the conclusion of spiritual gifts, what remains?

Faith, hope, and charity: *“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”* (**I Corinthians 13:13**).

- Love is the bond of perfectness (**Colossians 3:14**).
- Love is fully revealed and can be fully lived. Faith, hope, and love have outlasted spiritual gifts as God designed. Faith and hope will be realized at the second coming of our Savior (**I Peter 1:9; 13**).