

Love & Gifts

1 Corinthians 13

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The More Excellent Way

1 Corinthians 13:1

There were thoughts in the ancient world that angels spoke in their own language. Speaking without love is not beautiful, but noisy.

1 Corinthians 13:2

Spiritual gifts are not the sign that the Holy Spirit is in your life; love is.

1 Corinthians 13:3

You are nothing without love. You gain nothing without love.

Cornerstone Statement of Faith: The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus in Acts 1, is for all believers and that this baptism is normally accompanied by the evidence of speaking in tongues, referred to in 1 Corinthians 14:15 as praying in the Spirit. We believe that a person can be baptized in the Holy Spirit during the time Jesus is regenerating him, or any time subsequent to his regeneration (new birth) experience.

Speaking in tongues/praying in the Spirit is the normal, but not necessary, overflow of the Spirit-empowered life.

We need to avoid two Pentecostal/charismatic mistakes:

Mistake #1: Thinking momentary encounters with the Holy Spirit are something to attain.

I believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit that Jesus talks about in Acts 1 is subsequent to, and separate from, the experience of the new birth (i.e. being born again, getting saved, regeneration, conversion, etc.). The baptism in the Holy Spirit (i.e. filling of the Spirit, anointing of the Spirit, empowerment of the Spirit) isn't something you *get*; it is something you *walk in*.

Mistake #2: Making tongues alone the absolute sign of Christian spirituality.

In a desire to determine whether or not they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit they were seeking, early Pentecostals looked to the Scripture for the evidence. In Acts they saw the connectivity between the baptism of the Spirit and speaking in tongues and concluded that speaking in tongues is the absolute initial, and biblical, evidence that a person has been Spirit-filled.

As the years progressed in the Pentecostal tradition the question, "Are they Spirit-filled?" became synonymous with "Do they speak in tongues?" Over the years, the effect of this teaching has caused charismatics to value tongues over love, power over purity and charisma over character. *And it is wrong.*

What is the real evidence that a man or woman has received the baptism with the Holy Ghost? Divine love, which is charity. Charity is the Spirit of Jesus. They will have the fruits of the Spirit... This is the real Bible evidence in their daily walk and conversation; and the outward manifestations; speaking in tongues and the signs following...

William Seymour
The Apostolic Faith (1908)

Christians who live in a Pentecostal/charismatic subculture functionally value the gifts of the Spirit over the fruit of the Spirit. For this reason, I packed my bags and left the charismatic movement, I have made a conscious decision to leave the Pentecostal/charismatic subculture.

Jesus said, "All men will know you are my disciples if you love one another."

Love in its truest form

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

- 1) Love is patient: *a passive response of grace to others*
- 2) Love is kind: *an active response of goodness to others*
- 3) Love does not envy: *not desiring personal gain at another's loss*
- 4) Love does not boast: *not drawing attention to yourself*
- 5) Love is not arrogant: *not become an ego-centric windbag*
- 6) Love is not rude: *not bringing disgrace or dishonor to another*
- 7) Love does not insist on its own way: *not self-seeking*
- 8) Love is not irritable: *not easily angered* (NIV)
- 9) Love is not resentful: *not keeping a scorecard of wrongs*
- 10) Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing: *not becoming happy when others fail or sin*
- 11) Love does not rejoice with the truth: *celebrating in the right actions of others*
- 12) Love bears all things: *willing to put up with anything*
- 13) Love believes all things: *keeping confidence or faith*
- 14) Love hopes all things: *maintaining a positive expectation*
- 15) Love endures all things: *continuing to put up with things*
- 16) Love never ends: *never calls it quits*

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

Love is far more important than the gifts of the Spirit, because the gifts are temporary; love is forever.

Some people use this passage to build a case that the gift of tongues and prophecy have passed away. They claim that "the perfect" is the Bible and now that we have a Bible we do not need tongues and prophecy.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

"The perfect" is not the coming of the Bible, but the coming of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13:13

These three cords bind Christians together: faith in God the Father, hope in the return of Jesus, & love given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5 ESV God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I feel weak
when I get depressed
when I am tempted
when I am lonely
when I feel like God is a million miles away

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I do not understand
when I am suffering
when I do not know what to do
when I have no more words to pray
when I feel angry
when I feel unloved and rejected

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I fail and I want to quit
when I succeed and I want to brag
when I am confused
when I feel afraid
when I cannot focus

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I lack desire
when I am not disciplined
when I want to lie
when I think my instincts are wrong
when I no longer care
when I become envious

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I am enticed by temporary pleasure
when I feel in control
when I am talking to my children
when I serve in God's church
when I awake in the morning
when I lie down to sleep at night

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I am forgetful
when I am an insensitive jerk
when I am unkind
when I am shallow
when I am congratulated and praised
when I accomplish my goals
when I am celebrated
when I am playing the role of the imposter

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I am resting
when I am working
when I am playing
when I stand to worship
when I sit in front of the TV
when I stand to speak
when I stand for truth

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I am distracted by technology
when I am drained of creativity
when I try to love my wife like Christ
when I engage culture
when I am self-absorbed
when I feel empty

I need the Holy Spirit...

when I want to feel truly alive



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