

## Without Love I Say Nothing

I Corinthians 13:1

In I Corinthians 13, God defines love *as a verb of action, not an adjective of emotion*. This agape love will never fail. Without love: *I say nothing* (v.1), *I am nothing*, (v.2) *I profit nothing* (v.3).

### I. The ability to speak many languages eloquently is a prized gift for anyone at any time.

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love...” (I Cor. 13:1)

Corinth is located in southern Greece, about 50 miles from Athens. According to the Roman poet Horace, Corinth stood at a heavily traveled crossroads of the Roman Empire (land and sea). Corinth sat on an isthmus (Peloponnesian), bordered by harbors on the east and west.

**All the tongues of men were spoken at Corinth.** Christians desired to learn the languages.

**(A). If I speak with the tongues of men . . .** all languages of people everywhere. How many languages exist today? In 2019, ethnologue listed 7,111 distinct languages in the world. That number is constantly in flux because we are learning more about the world every day. In addition, languages themselves are in flux. They are living and dynamic dialects.

**(B). If I speak with the tongues of angels –** angels indeed communicate (Is. 6:3; Dan. 8:13), but they don’t have tongues in the proper sense. The tongues of angels (spirit beings) are what ancients called speech of the heart. What does the tongues of angels mean?

- (1). Paul could be referring to angels when they speak to humans. Imagine the special words spoken to Hagar, Abram, Jacob, Moses, Mary, and others; special words.
- (2). Paul could be using a metaphor to identify the most beautiful human discourse. It would be similar to saying Stephen had “the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15) and Israel ate “the bread of angels” (Ps. 78:25) which was manna from heaven. The Tongues of angels may be speaking in incredibly beautiful and persuasive ways.

### II. To love personally is preeminently more important than being able to speak beautifully.

“If I speak... *but do not have love*, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (v. 1).

**(A). God is more interested in how we treat people than He is what we teach people.**

This includes parents/children, husbands/wives, employers/employees, etc...

**(B). Love is manifested in my actions taken, not my words spoken.**

There are 15 descriptive phrases for love in I Cor. 13:4-8: Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. *Love never fails you in this life.*

### III. If I speak with supreme eloquence but do not have love, I say *nothing*.

Speech is mere empty sound, of no great advantage, of little use and profit to others.

**(A). I have become a noisy gong ...**A gong was used at the Temple of Aphrodite to call the people to worship. The gong called pagans to worship at a place of “false love.”

**(B). I have become a clanging symbol ...** “clang, clang, clang, clang, clang” —awful sounds. With no actions of love in your marriage, family, and relationships, life has no harmony.