

# “For the Edification of the Church”

## 1 Corinthians Chapter 14

apters 12, 13, and 14 are important chapters concerning spiritual things.

Chapter 12 - Spiritual Gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and are to bring Unity

Chapter 13 - Spiritual Gifts are to be used with “the better way” which is Love

Chapter 14 - Spiritual Gifts are to Edify

### 1Cr 14:1 1) Comparing Tongues and Prophecy vs 1-25

Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

- In the last chapter we have defined Love and have seen it’s superiority to all the gifts of the Spirit.
- Chapter heading are not in the original letter. They are aid to help us locate particular passages. This first verse is a continuation of the thought from chapter 13.
- We are to “PURSUE LOVE”. Pursue = to seek/strive to obtain
- Yet we are to “DESIRE EARNESTLY” spiritual gifts. Desire = a longing or craving, as for something that brings satisfaction or enjoyment.
- Clearly, Love has superiority in our endeavors. It is wrong for us to pursue gifts more that love. It is a perversion of the Christian experience that has hurt the church.
- Paul now addresses the practice of the Corinthians with regards to tongues and prophecy.

1Cr 14:2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

The Direction

1Cr 14:3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

- Verse 2 - Speaking in a Tongue speaks to GOD
  - No one understands
  - His spirit speaks mysteries
    - a. If we misunderstand this we think the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 that the disciples were preaching to the mixed culture in Jerusalem. They we speaking to God and the people OVERHEARD them. *“...we heard them speaking the wonderful works of God.”*
    - Also, Acts 10:46 *“and they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.”*
    - b. If we misunderstand this we think the interpretation of tongues is a message from God to man when it is a message from man to God. Romans 8:26 *“the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words”*
- Verse 3 - Prophesying - Speaks to MEN
  - Edification - Uplifting for moral improvement
  - Exhortation - to persuade, encourage and inspire
  - Consolation - providing comfort and relief from suffering grief or disappointment
    - a. Notice that prophecy is POSITIVE in nature.

1Cr 14:4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

The Beneficiary

- A person who speaks in tongues edifies HIMSELF.
  - Jude 20 *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit”*
- A person who prophesies edifies THE CHURCH.

1Cr 14:5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

The Profit

1Cr 14:6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

- Paul does not prohibit tongues but actually wishes all spoke in tongues. BUT even more he would rather they would prophesy because the church would be edified.
- The focus is not us speaking in tongues or prophesying but us edifying the church.
- Our gift, whatever it is should edify others. Not be about elevating the individual.

- 1Cr 14:7 **The Example** Yet *even* lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a **distinction** in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?
- 1Cr 14:8 For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?
- 1Cr 14:9 So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is **clear**, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.
- 1Cr 14:10 There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning.
- 1Cr 14:11 If then I do not know the **meaning** of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.
- Paul in these passages is mostly referring to our assembling together. In a corporate group the language spoken must be understood by those present to hear. Tongues as a devotion to God, by themselves provide no understanding for the hearer. It should not be used in the corporate gathering without someone to provide understanding.
  - Speech in the corporate gathering should be:
    - Distinct - unmistakable in purpose and intent. Spiritual conversations are spiritual. Entertaining are entertaining, foolish are foolish
    - Clear - well marked, obvious. Easy to understand.
    - Have meaning - (Greek *dynamis*) power to effect change
- 1Cr 14:12 **The Seeking** So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church.
- 1Cr 14:13 Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.
- 1Cr 14:14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.
- Paul is distinct, clear and meaningful in his teaching concerning spiritual gifts.
    - They are for the edification of the church.
    - If tongues are used there must be an interpreter. If not it doesn't edify the church.
  - Whatever our gift it is to edify the church. They are for the benefit of others.
- 1Cr 14:15 **The Outcome** What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.
- 1Cr 14:16 Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?
- 1Cr 14:17 For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.
- 1Cr 14:18 I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;
- 1Cr 14:19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.
- For those who speak in tongues
    - Go ahead pray in the spirit, sing in the spirit (privately before God)
    - But above all speak with understanding also, to Edify the Church
  - For those who DO NOT speak in tongues
    - Go ahead and pray, go ahead and sing
    - But above all Edify the church
- 1Cr 14:20 **The Sign** Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.
- 1Cr 14:21 **Isaiah 28:11-12** In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord.
- 1Cr 14:22 So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

1Cr 14:23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?  
1Cr 14:24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;  
1Cr 14:25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

- Verses 21 and 22 are clear that
  - Tongues are a sign for those who do not believe
  - Prophecy is a sign for those who believe.

BUT>>>

- Verses 23-25 indicate
  - If an unbeliever comes to church and everyone is speaking in tongues they will think these people are crazy
  - If an unbeliever comes to church and everyone is prophesying he will fall on his face and worship God.

Understand context (reference Isaiah 28 - JUDGEMENT)

- In the days of Isaiah, Israel was not listening to the prophets in their own language, so the prophet is telling Israel that they will believe when the Assyrians come in and conquer and will speak a language they do not understand.
- Paul is building a bridge in thought
  - Tongues in Isaiah's day was a sign to unbelievers that judgment had come.  
In the church, Paul is saying that if everyone is speaking in tongues that the unbeliever will think the church is crazy and remain an unbeliever pushing them to judgment.
  - Prophecy in Isaiah's day showed the believer that God was in control and was their salvation.  
In the church, prophecy doesn't push (or direct) an unbeliever to judgment but to their conversion, bowing their knee in surrender to the Lord.
- Tongues does not draw a man to salvation. Words with understanding do.

1Cr 14:26 **2) Application in Public** vs 26-40

What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

- Paul Repeats his emphasis so it is not forgotten by this hot issue about tongues and prophecy.
- EDIFY, EDIFY, EDIFY, EDIFY!
- This would mean that a church service is where we come to participate in building up (edifying) people not sitting passively receiving.

1Cr 14:27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret;

1Cr 14:28 but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

- **Order Concerning Tongues**
- For tongues to be edifying to the church there must be structure and understanding.
- 2 or 3 at most and in turn - structure
- MUST be an interpreter - understanding
- If no interpreter, those who speak in a tongue MUST keep silent (*speak only with an inner voice*) the issue isn't speaking in tongues during church, it is speaking PUBLICLY in tongues during church

1Cr 14:29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.

1Cr 14:30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent.

1Cr 14:31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted;

1Cr 14:32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets;

- **Order Concerning Prophecy**
- Just like the use of tongues in the corporate setting, prophecy to be edifying to the church there must be structure and understanding.
- 2 or 3 at most and in turn - structure
- Prophecies are to be judged (evaluated).
  - 1 John 4:1 *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."*
  - Ephesians 2:20 judge them by our foundation "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone."
  - 2 Corinthians 13:1 states a principle repeated at least six times in the Bible: *"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*
- Learning and edification are the goals.
- Prophecy is not an uncontrolled urge. The urge may be strong but the man or woman who speaks is still in control.

1Cr 14:33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

- If confusion is in the service it is not from God. God brings peace.

1Cr 14:34 The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

1Cr 14:35 If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

- Paul has already established that women can speak in the church service. 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.
- This could mean that in judging prophecy that should be done by the male leadership in the church and the woman be submissive to that authority.
- Also, *In the Jewish synagogues, men and women would sit apart. But if a woman chattered or called out to her husband sitting far off, she would be dealt with severely. The Corinthian church may have adopted the same kind of seating arrangement, but with many women from Gentile backgrounds, they did not know how to conduct themselves at a church meeting. Paul is teaching them how. (Guzik)*

1Cr 14:36 Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only?

1Cr 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

1Cr 14:38 But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

- Paul is taking a strong stance on this structure being in place in Corinth.
  - This First came from Paul not from the Corinthians
  - If someone thinks they are spiritual then they should recognize this instruction from Paul has the authority of being the Lord's Commandment.
  - Verse 38 in the KJV *"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant"* Paul doesn't really regard the man who is determined to oppose this teaching.

1Cr 14:39 Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

1Cr 14:40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

- In summary,
  - Desire Prophecy to Edify the Others
  - Do not despise tongues, but don't be unruly and offensive or unscriptural.
  - Facilitate Learning and Edification by being proper and orderly.

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