

1 Corinthians Part Two

Lesson #18, Chapter 14:1-19

Read Chapter 14 completely before beginning this lesson. Take the time to ask the Lord for His help as you study His Word.

1. Chapter 14 picks up where Chapter 12 ended which means Chapter 13 is a rabbit trail, a vital and valuable rabbit trail, but a bit of an excursion, nonetheless. Now once again, the apostle Paul picks up where he left off at the end of Chapter 12. What does he desire the Corinthians to do according to verse 1? How does this injunction provide balance to his instruction in Chapter 13?
2. Do we get to choose which spiritual gifts we have? See 1 Cor. 12:11, 28.
3. Explain the Corinthians' misunderstanding about spiritual gifts.
4. Since spiritual gifts are given to us by the Lord and are not something we can choose for ourselves, what is the purpose of desiring the greater spiritual gifts (see 1 Cor. 12:31 and 14:1)? See verses 2-4, 12, and 26 for your answer.

Keep in mind that your answer to question 4 is Paul's purpose in everything he writes in Chapter 14.

5. What two gifts are being compared in this chapter? See verses 2-4.
6. Why did Paul want the Corinthians to long for the gift of prophecy above all others? See verses 2-4.

7. What have you learned so far in verses 1-4 about a problem that was plaguing the Corinthian church? See also 1 Cor. 12:27-31.

Keep the following helpful insights in mind as you study. (Taken from Pastor Jack Hughes' lesson on "The Gift of Tongues" from the Bible study series on *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. If you'd like a copy of the whole lesson, contact me through my website at www.scripturepaths.com and I'll get it for you.)

"The key to understanding I Corinthians 14 is to observe the singular and plural usages of the word tongue."

"The singular is used to identify "ecstatic speech" in almost every case. Ecstatic speech is not a known language, is not an expression of the Holy Spirit, and doesn't edify anyone. Ecstatic speech was practiced by pagans and some Jews at that time as it was thought to be a spiritual act."

"The plural form of "tongues" in I Corinthians 14 is used for the miraculous gift of speaking in a known language that was unknown to the one speaking, such as recorded in Acts 2."

8. Based on the information from Pastor Jack Hughes above, what kind of tongue-speaking is Paul discussing in verses 2-4? Summarize what you learn about this type of tongue-speaking from verses 2-4.
9. Based on the information from Pastor Jack Hughes above, what kind of tongue-speaking does Paul introduce in verse 5?
10. Explain what the gift of tongues looks like after reading Acts 2:5-13.
11. What distinction does Paul make between using the biblical gift of tongues and the ability to prophesy in 1 Corinthians 14:5?

12. In verse 6 Paul gives further explanation for his comments from the preceding verse. What is the “problem” with using the biblical gift of tongues in the church? What brings the most spiritual “profit” to other believers according to verses 3 and 6?

13. Paul uses a couple illustrations to underscore what he's trying to communicate in the previous verses. What does he compare the biblical gift of tongues to in verses 7-8? What point is he trying to make with his examples?

14. What is the problem with possessing the gift of tongues according to verse 9? Don't forget what the purpose for all spiritual gifts is according to verses 2-4, 12, 26.

15. In verses 10-11 Paul gives another example to emphasize his point about the use of tongue-speaking in the church. What point does he make and how does that back up what he's been saying about the value of the biblical gift of tongues in the church?

16. What is Paul's admonition to the Corinthians in verse 12?

17. Based on Paul's argument from verses 1–11, what conclusion does he expect the Corinthians to arrive at by the time they read verse 12?

18. Let's crystallize our thoughts further by answering this question: According to verse 12, what should our motivation be every time we exercise our spiritual gifts?

19. In verses 13-17 Paul returns to discussing the use of pagan, ecstatic speech type of tongue-speaking. It's obvious from Paul's comments that some were mistaking the ecstatic speech kind of tongue-speaking for the biblical gift of tongues in which one speaks in a known language. Summarize his thoughts about using ecstatic speech in the worship service from verses 13-14.
20. The NASB translates the beginning of verse 15 this way: *What is the outcome then?* Yet the ESV and NIV provide a better sense of Paul's transitional thoughts when they translate the beginning of verse 15 this way: *What am I to do?* This question fits perfectly with the context of the passage and flows easily into the answer for this query. What did Paul desire to do with his gifts according to verses 15-17?

For a review of the temporary nature of sign gifts see the following article:
http://thecripplegate.com/what_cessationism_is_not/

“Tongues were a temporary sign gift (1 Cor. 13:8). The phrase “they will cease” is in the *middle* voice, emphasizing “they will stop themselves.” The implication is that tongues would not continue until “the perfect comes”—the time when knowledge and prophecy gifts would be terminated—but would cease of their own accord when their usefulness terminated. If tongues were to continue until “the perfect comes” the verb would likely be *passive* in form.

Tongues were a part of the miraculous era of Christ and the apostles and were necessary, along with the gift of miracles, as an authenticating sign of the apostles (2 Cor. 12:12). With the completion of the Scriptures there was no longer any need for an authenticating sign; the Bible was now the authority in verifying the message that God’s servants proclaimed. Tongues were a sign gift belonging to the infancy stage of the church (1 Cor. 13:10–11; 14:20).

Tongues were used as a sign to unbelieving Jews and in this sense were used in evangelism (1 Cor. 14:21–22). When unbelieving Jews would enter the assembly and hear people speaking in foreign languages it was a sign to them that God was doing a work in their midst, reminiscent of Isaiah’s day (Isa. 28:11–12). This sign should lead them to faith in Jesus as their Messiah.” [*The Moody Handbook of Theology*, page 273.]

21. What kind of tongues did Paul appreciate being able to use according to verse 18?

First Corinthians 14 is the most significant text concerning the God honoring practice of the biblical gift of tongues. Paul contrasts the biblical gift of tongues with pagan ecstatic speech all the way through the chapter. The Corinthians had merged the pagan practice of ecstatic speech with the biblical gift and therefore Paul writes to sort out the mess. The chart below will help you see the stark contrast between ecstatic speech, which is practiced in so-called “tongues speaking churches” today and the legitimate biblical gift of tongues, which operated in the first century. Information from Pastor Jack Hughes’ study “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.”

Text	Biblical Gift of Tongues	Text	Pagan Ecstatic Speech
Acts 2:6; I Cor. 14:10	Tongues is the ability to speak the gospel to unbelievers in a language unknown to oneself.	I Cor. 14:9, 11	Ecstatic speech is not a language but gibberish spoken into the air and makes others see you as a barbarian.
I Cor. 12:7; 14:6, 12, 26	Tongues is for edification of others.	I Cor. 14:4	Ecstatic speech is for the edification of self.
I Cor. 13:1	Tongues is practiced out of love for others.	I Cor. 14:4	Ecstatic speech is practiced out of love for self.
I Cor. 13:8	Tongues is designed to pass away after a time.		Ecstatic speech continues today.
I Cor. 14:5, 13, 28	Tongues are always interpreted so that others are edified and if there is no interpreter, the gift of tongues is not employed even if one has the gift.	I Cor. 14:23	Ecstatic speech can't be interpreted because it is not a language and therefore no one is edified. Ecstatic speech is uttered even though it can't be interpreted.
I Cor. 14:22	Tongues is to be used as a sign for evangelization of the lost.		Ecstatic speech is practiced to heighten religious feeling, impress others, and even deceive.
I Cor. 14:27	No more than three people are allowed to speak in tongues during a worship service.		Often many speak in ecstatic speech simultaneously during a worship service.
I Cor. 14:33-34	Women are never allowed to speak in tongues in public worship services.		Women regularly utter ecstatic speech in public worship.
I Cor. 14:33, 40	Practiced in an orderly manner for the edification of believers and the evangelization of unbelievers.		Often practiced in an emotional frenzy promoting chaos and disorder.
Acts 2:5-41	The person exercising the gift knows what they are saying and their mind is fruitful.	I Cor. 14:2, 14	The person practicing ecstatic speech does not know what they are saying and their mind is not fruitful.
	From God the Holy Spirit		From self or Satan