

Tongues, Prophecy, and Church Conduct

A Study of 1 Corinthians 14.

I. 14:1 - We are to pursue love but we are also to desire spiritual gifts. Paul never once discouraged the Corinthians from desiring the gifts of the Spirit. On the contrary he encouraged it. He was only concerned for their proper use. Love should be our motivation behind the desire for gifts.

II. Seven Advantages Of Tongues.

1. Tongues are a supernatural prayer language that gives us a direct line to God. NO ONE UNDERSTANDS you and that includes the devil (v. 2)
 - a. You are speaking mysteries in the spirit and Satan cannot understand the mysteries of God because God only reveals them to His children (Ps. 25:14; Prov. 3:32; Amos 3:7; 1 Cor. 2:7-12).
2. Tongues will edify and build up your inner man (v. 4; Jude 20).
3. If interpreted, they can be used to edify the church (vv. 5-13).
4. Praying in tongues is praying from the depths of your spirit. In this way you will not be offering carnal, fleshly, and repetitious prayers to God (vv. 14-15).
 - a. There are two ways to pray according to this verse: in the spirit and with the understanding. When we pray in the understanding we should pray in line with God's Word (1 John 5:14-15; John 15:7).
 - b. Praying in the Spirit is a weapon against the devil (Eph. 6:18).
5. You can sing in the spirit thereby offering unto God perfect worship (v. 15; John 4:23-24).
6. You can render unto God perfect thanks in tongues (vv. 16-17).
7. If done correctly, tongues can be used as a sign to the unbeliever (vv. 22-25).

III. Seven Additional Facts about Tongues.

1. Paul never once discouraged tongues. On the contrary, he desired that everyone would speak in them (v. 5).
2. In a public assembly, tongues should be interpreted (vv. 5-13, 27-28).

3. Your mind will not understand anything you are saying. If you want to understand then you must ask God for the interpretation (vv. 14-15).
4. Paul spoke in tongues ALL THE TIME and even thanked God for it. In the church however, He'd rather speak with the understanding so that he could edify others (vv. 18-19).
5. Tongues were foretold in the Old Testament (v. 21, Isa. 28:11-12).
6. If tongues are spoken in a public assembly then it should be interpreted by two or three others (vv. 27-28).
7. Tongues are NOT TO BE FORBIDDEN (v. 39).

IV. Facts About Prophecy.

1. Of all gifts we are especially to desire to prophesy (vv. 1, 39).
2. The reason we should desire this gift is because it speaks edification, exhortation, and comfort to men. This is the main purpose for ministry (v. 3).
3. Prophecy is preferred over tongues UNLESS there is an interpretation (vv. 5-6).
 - a. Some have misinterpreted these verses to say that Paul saw no value in tongues. They say He cared more for prophecy. The key word in these Scriptures is "unless". This is saying that if an interpretation accompanies the tongues then it is equal to prophecy.
 - b. Dr. Frederick K. C. Price, pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center illustrated it best: "If you have a dime and a nickel, the dime is naturally better than the nickel. Both are of value but one can do more with a dime than with a nickel. But if one has TWO nickels then they both equal the value of a dime."
4. Prophecy will convince and convict an unbeliever (v. 24).
5. Prophecy will prove to the unbeliever that God is true by revealing the secrets of his heart (v. 25).
6. True prophecy will cause an unbeliever to fall down on his face and worship God (v. 25).
7. The spirit of prophecy can be controlled. It will not be forced on us. So we are to prophesy in an orderly fashion (vv. 29-33).

V. Instructions For Church Services.

1. Every Christian should come with something to add to the service. We are to be PARTICIPANTS, not observers and pew warmers (v. 26).

2. God is not the author of confusion but of peace, therefore if anything causes confusion instead of peace, it must be dealt with (vv. 33, 40).
3. Women must conduct themselves in a manner that is honorable, pleasing to God, and edifying to the church services (vv. 34-36).
 - a. Notice the words in v. 34: "as the law also says". I believe that this is speaking of a law pertaining to that particular time. Many have used this verse to say that women are not to preach or teach in the church. This is not applying Scripture correctly.
4. If you are a prophet or you claim to be spiritual then you will accept God's Word as TRUE and directly from him and not man (vv. 36-38).