

Letters to the church in...



Corinth

Focus: 1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Lesson 14-Tongues and Church Worship

- **The Gift of Prophesying, preaching, or proclaiming the truth of God's Word is far superior to the gift of speaking in some other Tongue (language) (v.1-6)**
 - The Greek word **glossa** is the one that is translated as "Tongue" or "Language."
 - (v.2) The one speaking in an unknown Tongue speaks to God (he might say wonderful "mysteries" in his speaking, but none of us would understand those things if it wasn't translated into the Language we know. To "**Speak**" means to communicate! Obviously, the **speaker** of the words must clearly understand what he is saying!!
 - (v.2,4) It is clear that the one speaking an "unknown tongue" definitely understands his own language and words, because he "edifies" or "builds up" himself.
 - (v.6) Any type of speaking or communication is "not profitable" **UNLESS it can be clearly understood**. A Foreign Language used in the church should be translated so that the people understand the message that is being spoken (v.5).
 - **Paul is clearly dealing with a problem or an abuse of the gift of Tongues in the Corinthian church.** (He's trying to get the matter set straight).
 - **Getting the background on the many languages** (Genesis 11:1-9). Closer to the time of Creation, the whole world spoke **one language**. But men rebelled against God. Because of their rebellion, God had to divide them up—they had been all working together in evil against God. **God divided up the peoples by confusing their languages, so that everyone began to speak a different language—then they could no longer understand each other or work together (v.9).** THOUGHT QUESTIONS: Why would God create a bunch of languages in one church where everybody was already speaking the same language (and therefore had no need of a different language)? Why would God come down and create "Babel" in a church of His? Certainly, He would not!! **THE GIFT OF TONGUES was to reverse the effects of Babel** so that the gospel could be communicated effectively (see Acts 2:4-8).
- **The distinction or meaning of your words MUST be clearly understood by those who are listening to you—otherwise your words are useless (v.7-12)**
 - (v.11) we cannot be like a "Barbarian" having no meaning.
 - (v.12) You might be zealous and excited about the gifts that God has given you, but you are not to get showy!! There is no point to that! (You must seek to edify and build up!)
- **We must speak and pray "with the understanding," not with some "unknown tongue" (v.13-17)**
 - (v.14) "If I pray in an unknown tongue..." "...my spirit prays" but no one will understand me. You may pray and say many things to God, but if no one understands, then it's not helpful to them (compare this verse also with v.2).

- (v.17) You may certainly be giving thanks to God [good for you]. But the other person, who does not understand your language, has no idea what was said—it does not edify or build him up at all.
- **The gift of Tongues is for a sign to unbelievers, Not to believers (v.18-25, 26-28)**
 - Better to speak **five words that are understood**, than to speak 10,000 in some unknown language (v.19). (in the church).
 - (v.21) **The purpose of the gift of “Tongues” was to communicate the Gospel to people of other languages without having to go and learn a new language.** (it was a miraculous ability—God had reversed the effects of the Tower of Babel).
 - “A sign for those who believe not....not to those who already believe” (v.22).
 - Prophesying the truth will convert souls; speaking an unknown language will look like madness! (v.23-25).
 - (v.26-28) God’s word tells us here that if someone speaks in an unknown tongue at church, it should be orderly, and it **should be interpreted (translated)**. “If there is no interpreter, **let him KEEP SILENCE in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God**” (v.28). (Obviously the speaker understands the language very well).
- **Instructions concerning those who were given some prophetic insight (v.29-33)**
 - All things in the church should be done in an orderly way, and by turn. There should never be confusion, Babel, or Babylon, because God is not the author of confusion. Prophets must speak according to the writings of the Bible prophets—Bible truth (v.32).
- **What else does Paul have to say about men and woman in the church? (v.34-35) Should they whisper and chat noisily about things during the church service?**
 - **Do woman have a place in some kind of ministry?** Sure! (See about Philip’s four daughters, Acts 21:8,9; Deborah, Judges 4:4,5; Anna, Luke 2:36; Acts 2:17,18). But, you never find a woman being chosen as a Bishop or Pastor of a church. That is not biblical. All of the Levitical priests were males. All of the 12 Apostles were males. Paul said to Timothy, “A Bishop should be the husband of one wife...ruling his own household well...” (1 Timothy 3:2,4,5). The man was called to be the head of the household and the head of church matters.(1 Cor. 14:34,35 is NOT saying that woman are not to talk at all at church. It is telling us they should NOT be whispering and chatting and making noise during the service. They should be meek and quiet. If they want to ask questions about things, they should do so later).
- **The word of God comes by the inspiration of the Spirit—not just to any one man, but unto whomever the Lord chooses to give it (v.36-40) ...other final instructions.**
- **A Practical thought Question answered:** *If most of the manifestations of Tongues that I’ve heard about or seen in churches today are not the genuine gift; if much of it is fake, biblically wrong and of the devil, then what about the Godly people I know who seem to have had this experience? Answer: While God certainly does not endorse or encourage any practice that is not right, neither does He abandon us because we may be wrong or confused about something. God is merciful and He is working with all of us, in spite of our misunderstandings, trying to do all in His power to lead each one of us to salvation. A person may be a true follower of Jesus Christ, they may live a Godly life, and at the same time, they may also be confused about an issue like this. They may be involved with things in their experience, such as a false manifestation of Tongues, yet the Lord still loves them and is working in their lives.*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to use your spiritual gifts and talents for the glory of God? _____