

# 1 Corinthians

## Chapter 14:26-40

July 7, 1996

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- Spiritual gifts are not a measure of spirituality.
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- Spiritual gifts are distributed according to God's purposes.
  - Miraculous gifts were used by God to testify to something.
  - Spiritual gifts are given for the edification of the body of Christ.
  - **1 Corinthians Outline:**
    - Chapter 1 Ungodly divisions result from man's wisdom.
    - Chapter 2 Carnal man cannot understand our Spiritual God.
    - Chapter 3 All Christians will have their labors tried by fire.
    - Chapter 4 Boasting in our leaders puffs up and destroys fellowship.
    - Chapter 5 Maintain the purity of the Church.
    - Chapter 6 Do not dispute before the world and do not partake in sexual immorality.
    - Chapter 7 Principles of marriage
    - Chapter 8 The responsibility of liberty
    - Chapter 9 Those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel
    - Chapter 10 You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons.
    - Chapter 11 Propriety in corporate worship and communion
    - Chapter 12 The body of Christ is unified around a diversity of spiritual gifts
    - Chapter 13 Some spiritual gifts are temporary but love never fails
    - Chapter 14 The spiritual gifts are to be administered in such a way that the entire body is edified.
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*But the superstition and folly of some ensuing ages, inventing and divulging innumerable miracles false and foolish, proved a most disadvantageous prejudice unto the gospel, and a means to open a way unto Satan to impose endless delusions upon Christians; for as true and real miracles, with becoming circumstances, were the great means that won and reconciled a regard and honor unto Christian religion in the world, so the pretense of such as either were absolutely false, or such as whose occasions, end, matter, or manner, were unbecoming the greatness and holiness of Him who is the true author of all miraculous operations, is the greatest dishonor unto religion that any on can invent. - John Owen, 1677, The Works of John Owen, Vol. IV, chapter V*

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- **Introduction & Review**

In the first half of chapter 14, Paul went in to great detail on the gift of tongues and its use. We have already established that both prophecy and interpreted tongues were for the edification of the body. It is in this edification that the gifts find the purpose and highest calling; the building up and maturity of Christ's church.

- **Exposition**
- **1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

<sup>26</sup> *How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.*

- Having established that tongues were a sign of judgment upon an unbelieving Jewry, and that prophecy was for the benefit of believers and evangelism, Paul speaks with incredulity regarding the lack of order which existed at their corporate gathering.

<sup>27</sup> *If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.*<sup>28</sup> *But if there is no*

*interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.<sup>29</sup> Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.*

- Paul teaches here that decency and consideration of others are to be the standard of behavior in our corporate gatherings. Even when these gifts were active in the church, they were to be administered in an orderly way. Examples today of worship services that are chaotic are in clear violation of this command.
- Even if God were to give a sure word to the people, yet He provided no interpretation, the person with the word was to remain silent and he should simply pray in his head.
- There is a school of thought out there that believes that these verses establish a private prayer language spiritual gift because the person with the tongue is told to speak to himself and God. However, this entire concept would violate one of the fundamental principles that Paul has established regarding spiritual gifts; the Holy Spirit distributes them as He wishes for the edification of the body-not the individual.

*<sup>30</sup> But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.<sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.<sup>32</sup> And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.<sup>33</sup> For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

- Again, the standard is that each one should act in deference to the other. If one was speaking a word from the Lord and a new word came to someone else sitting nearby, the first was to defer to the second.
- In verses 29 and 32 Paul teaches that the others in the group should be listening carefully and testing the validity of what is being prophesied in the body. It is not enough to just say, "Let the Spirit do its work and believe by faith that the words are true." It is not a quenching of the Spirit to test these things rather this is allowing ourselves to be quenched by the Spirit.

*<sup>34</sup> Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.<sup>35</sup> And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.*

- As in other places Paul gives instruction on how the ladies were to participate in the corporate gatherings. The clarity of these verses suggest a complete prohibition of the ladies participating at all however, in chapter 10, Paul has already given instruction on how the ladies were to pray in corporate gathering. Therefore, this command should not be construed as absolute but rather is a prohibition of speaking authoritatively as he teaches similarly in 1 Tim. 2:11-14.
- In our fellowship these instructions have been made manifest by our encouragement of the men to lead their families in worship and ministry. Paul specifically teaches the men to pray, to teach and minister to one another. We do not discourage the women from praying however, we do demand that they pray in such a way that they honor their head.
- There is no prohibition at all from the ladies studying and growing in their walk with the Lord. In fact, they are told to learn in 1 Tim. 2:11 but always in such a way that they don't violate the headship of their husband. What this means is that the husbands should be the first source for understanding to which the wives turn-not the relatives, neighbors or friends.

*<sup>36</sup> Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?<sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.<sup>38</sup> But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.<sup>40</sup> Let all things be done decently and in order. NKJV*

- Paul concludes this topic by anticipating opposition to his teaching. If there were those who claimed to be gifted by the Spirit, if such a person were genuine, he would recognize that Paul was speaking the very words of God and he would conform himself to Paul's teaching.
- Verse 40 is really the central point to the last three chapters; our corporate gathering are not unspiritual simply because they are orderly. In fact Paul has taught here that orderly and considerate gatherings are actually a sign of maturity.