

**“EXCEL IN EDIFYING THE
CHURCH”**

1 Corinthians 14:1-20

INTRODUCTION

There are a wide variety of views on the spiritual gifts within the church. The gifts are for individuals to edify the body of Christ. Much is wrong in this area due to ignorance, however, but there is much right with Christians who are informed. Chapters 12, 13 and 14, along with the Gospels and the book of Acts are like gold for the church. Taking in these areas of Scripture help inoculate the church against ignorance! Chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians focuses on the issues of the gifts when the church assembles together.

TONGUES AND PROPHECY

Paul said that we *should* desire spiritual gifts. Tongues are the gift of the ability to supernaturally speak in a non-native language. This is to be used for prayer to express praise, thanksgiving and the glorifying of God. In **Acts 2**, they declared the “wonderful works of God”. In **Acts 10**, with this gift they magnified God. In our current chapter, **v. 16**, it is said that there is a giving of thanks. The purpose of tongues is for man to speak to God, not man to man, **v.2**. (There are times when God will provide the interpretation of a tongue. If someone “interprets” and it sounds like a message from the Lord, it’s not really an interpretation of the tongue, however). This is the one gift that builds up the person who exercises it, **v. 4**. Later, Paul mentions that with tongues, it is his spirit that prays even though he doesn’t mentally understand it. In **Romans 8:26-27** it also states that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings. We are weak and really don’t know how to pray! Paul prayed both ways, however, in the spirit *and* with understanding.

Prophecy, on the other hand, is a message from God to man. It is to build up, edify, exhort and comfort the church. A message that sounds judgmental or threatening would not pass the test. Paul stated that the gift of prophecy is a greater gift because it builds up the church body, not just an individual.

MISUSE OF THE GIFTS

Many have seen the gifts abused or misused, but this does not mean the gifts are wrong! Certainly, many things in this life have been abused, but are not necessarily bad in and of themselves, such as medicine, food, cars, etc. Jesus, in **Mark 16:7** said the gift of tongues would be a gift. Another misconception is that in order to be saved you must have the gift of tongues. We know this is not true, from **Acts 8**, **Acts 19**, as well as the example of the thief on the cross.

UNDERSTANDING IS SUPERIOR

With what Paul shared about the gifts, the one message that rings true is that in a public setting *understanding* is the best thing! For example, if you have musical instruments that play out of tune or with no melody, they lack a purpose or meaning, **verses 7-11**. That’s what makes prophecy a better gift, because it understandable and benefits the church, not just an individual.

CONSIDER

For all their faults, at least the Corinthians were zealous for the gifts and used them! They just needed some guidance so that the gifts would do what they were meant to do. In **verse 20** Paul challenges the church to be mature, not stubborn. The key concept in this passage of scripture is edification or building up others. We can be edifying to others just by showing up at the church! When we are not in attendance, it is just not the same. Let’s take time to show interest and genuine concern for others. There is nothing like the Church when we are functioning as God intended. There is strength to it and great encouragement from it!

PRAY

- * That the men of the fellowship would be strengthened as they gather together on Feb. 22nd.
- * That we would desire the spiritual gifts! Let the gifts benefit our body even today!
- * That we would allow God to show us the pride in us. Let us repent of it!