

# 1 Corinthians 14 Part 1

Prepared by: Pastor Blaine G. Smith

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## Introduction

The purpose of this 2 part lesson is to focus on the biblical use of tongues and church order. Whenever man puts his private interpretation to the Bible, it causes truth and power to be reduced to form of godliness void of power. Tongues is a powerful tool for the believer as he is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

✠ "Earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching)." (AMP) We are to desire and cultivate spiritual gifts and to prophesy. To prophesy means to speak under divine inspiration or to exercise the prophetic office.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

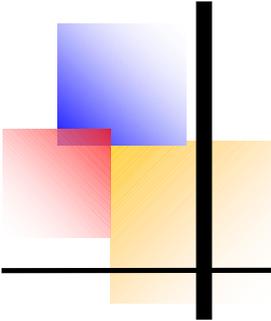
✠ ..."for no one understands or catches his meaning, because in the [Holy] Spirit he utters secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the understanding]." (AMP)

✠ Is there any advantage to speaking mysteries [divine secrets] to God in the Spirit? You can see why the devil fights tongues so hard. When we are speaking mysteries to God he doesn't know what is going on.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

✠ The one who prophesies interprets divine will and purpose and speaks under inspiration to men for their up building and constructive spiritual progress, encouragement and consolation. The gift of prophesy is not for predicting the future, it is for edification, exhortation and comfort. This gift in it's operation brings much the same benefits that anointed, divinely inspired preaching brings. It builds and inspires people to follow the Lord.

4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.



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✠ To edify is to build up, to construct, to charge up as in charging up a battery. Speaking in an unknown tongue builds [charges or edifies] you up, not the church. It is prophesy that builds [charges or edifies] the church. It is not necessary to have to choose between the two, both are needful and have their own place. Without first being edified yourself you won't stand much of a chance of edifying others. If the whole body of Christ came to church edified we would be able to take a lot of ground for the kingdom of God through intercessory prayer and true praise and worship. The real reason for coming to church should be to bless the Lord and lift Him up. If blessing the Lord was the goal of every church gathering and we succeeded in doing that one thing no one would leave without the Lord blessing and edifying each and every member of His body.

✠ "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,"  
Jude 1:20 (KJV) \

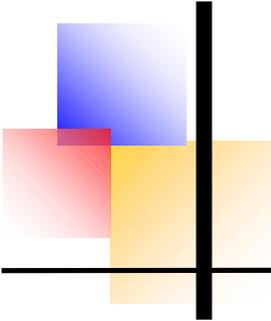
5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

✠ It was Paul's will for everyone to speak in tongues, but more especially that they prophesy. In a church setting Paul wants the members of the body to be able to interpret divine will and purpose and share this inspiration with the body for edification. When we gather together we must set different goals and priorities than the goals and priorities we have during our personal time spent with the Lord. There should be individual growth and direction at home and group growth and direction of the body of Christ when we are at church.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

✠ Remember speaking in tongues is for personal edification not church edification. We must speak either by revelation, knowledge, prophecy or doctrine in order to edify others.

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? 8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? 9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. [meaning, definition or purpose] 11 Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. 12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.



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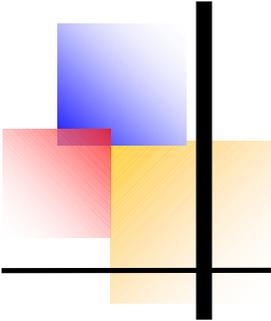
- ✠ "So it is with yourselves; since you are so eager and ambitious to possess spiritual endowments and manifestations of the [Holy] Spirit, [concentrate on] striving to excel and to abound [in them] in ways that will build up the church." (AMP)
- ✠ Paul is talking about the nine gifts of the Spirit which are to be used in a church gathering, not for personal use. When we are in church we should seek to excel in edifying the church and not seek personal edification. If you succeeded in edifying the church or any of its members you in turn will be edified by doing so. Remember that the gifts operate as the Spirit wills, therefore we must be flowing in the Spirit before the gifts will begin to manifest. The best way I have seen to flow in the Spirit is by ministering unto the Lord through praise and worship with reverence for the Holy Blood of Jesus. The gifts come as we are engulfed in His glory. I'm not saying that He can't or won't manifest the gifts any other way because He can and does. I have just seen the gifts operate more consistently in an atmosphere where worship was in Spirit and in Truth than in any other place.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

- ✠ If you speak forth a public utterance in tongues, it appears that it is God's will that you also interpret or Paul wouldn't have instructed us to ask God to help us interpret. There again it is not necessary that you interpret as long as there is someone there that can, but it is better if you can do both.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

- ✠ "For if I pray in and [unknown tongue, my spirit [by the Holy Spirit within me] prays, but my mind is unproductive [it bears no fruit and helps nobody]." (AMP)
- ✠ There is a difference in speaking forth in a public utterance of tongues as a sign to the unbeliever and praying in tongues. Praying in tongues is your spirit praying mysteries to God for intercession and self edification. In Romans we receive insight about how the Spirit helps us when we don't know how to pray. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." (Rom 8:26-27) The word infirmity means, feebleness (of mind or body) frailty. The Holy Ghost makes intercession according to the will of God. Because of our feebleness of mind or body the Spirit takes hold together, with us, against the opposition. Can you see the advantage to this? As Paul taught, it is not orderly for more than one person at a time to give an utterance in tongues, however if a Spirit of intercession hits the church as a whole it is acceptable



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regular kind of speech [speaking in tongues]. The same comparison could be made to one person leading the church in a prayer. In this setting it would be out of order for everyone to try to pray louder than the one that has the floor. Yet there are times when it is appropriate for the entire church to lift their voices to God in prayer.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

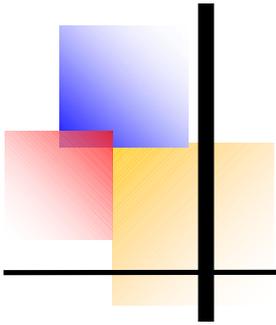
✠ "Then what am I to do? I will pray with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will also pray [intelligently] with my mind and understanding; I will sing with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will sing [intelligently] with my mind and understanding also." (AMP)

✠ Notice Paul said "I will." As an act of his will, he will pray and sing with the spirit [tongues]. Praying and singing with your spirit is praying and singing in tongues.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? 17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. (KJV)

✠ Verse 16 "...If you bless and render thanks with [your] spirit [thoroughly aroused by the Holy Spirit], how can anyone in the position of an outsider or he who is not gifted with [interpreting of unknown] tongues, say the Amen to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?" (AMP)

✠ Paul said you did a fine job giving thanks but no one was edified except you.



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## Study Questions

1. Should we earnestly desire and cultivate spiritual gifts?
2. What was Paul talking about when he said that we speak mysteries to God?
3. The criteria for judging prophecy is made up of three parts, the first being edification, what are the other two?
4. Speaking in tongues edifies who or what?
5. Complete the following verse. "...but he that prophesieth..."
6. T or F. We don't always know how to pray as we ought. The Spirit Himself helps us with intercession through groaning that cannot be spoken in our normal speech.
7. When you pray in tongues what part of you is praying?
8. What did God reveal to you as you studied?

## Extra Blessing

(Study to show yourself approved unto God 2 Timothy 2:15)

Read 1 Corinthians Chapter 13