

I CORINTHIANS 14

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Corinthians chapter 14 as we continue our study through the Word of God and this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

As we get into I Corinthians chapter 14 tonight we will finish up this section that is dealing with Spiritual gifts. And, as we have seen, this section covered I Corinthians chapters 12-14.

We have looked at the purpose of the gifts in I Corinthians 12:1-30.

Then the best gift being love in I Corinthians 12:31-13:13.

And here in I Corinthians chapter 14 Paul is going to speak on exercising these gifts in love.

And the focus is going to be on tongues, a highly controversial gift today. There are some who feel that this gift is for today and they may even go to the extreme that if you don't speak in tongues you are not saved.

And on the other end of the spectrum there are those who feel that this gift of tongues is not for today, only for the early church until the Scriptures were put together. Some will even say that if you are speaking in tongues it is of the Devil!

I hope to show you what the Scriptures have to say about this gift and it really is not that difficult if you don't approach it with pre-conceived ideas. Just let the Word of God speak for itself!

I like the way one writer put it. He wrote,

In [I Corinthians] 12:11 Paul argues that the Spirit apportions to each member a particular gift. Everyone has a gift matrix – probably a combination of gifts from the various gift clusters No gift is inherently better than the others . . . Gifts are not something that we can earn . . . and each member and the exercising of his or her gift is indispensable . . .

The church of Corinth had failed to recognize the beauty of the interdependence and indispensability of all of these gifts and had begun to overemphasize prophetic speech grace gifts. This has happened in some parts of the modern church as well. To put things in perspective, when was the last time you heard about a controversy in the local church about the gift of hospitality? There aren't two camps or positions on the gift of hospitality. There should be no divisions over gifts . . .

- Stephen T. Um, 1 Corinthians – The Word of the Cross, p.240

And, as we will see, there was a lot of jockeying for position with the gifts there in Corinth and thus, the chapter on exercising these gifts in love was so important for them to hear and for us to hear.

We need to know how we are to exercise these gifts and Paul will get into that this evening.

Remember how we concluded our study last week, as Paul said, “**And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.**” I Corinthians 13:13.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in I Corinthians chapter 14 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word.

I CORINTHIANS 14**VERSE 1**

Paul continues with the thought of **AGAPE** love from I Corinthians chapter 13. And we need to understand that love needs to be preeminent in the life of a Christian. We should earnestly desire this **AGAPE** love!

But what ends up happening many times is we go for the gifts, and the gifts, being exercised without love as we found out last time, is just a bunch of noise and it does nothing for anyone!

But when the gifts are exercised in love, then beautiful music is made, and it affects people's lives in a good way!

Now the question some may have is this. ***"But what about spiritual gifts?"***

Think of it like this. My friends are important to me, but my wife is far more important to me.

I truly believe if love is the motivating factor in our lives, then we will desire spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ! It is not about me or the person exercising the gifts.

And, if love is not the motivating factor, then it is ugly, as we have seen here in the church in Corinth.

You see, if **AGAPE** love is flowing, one of the most important spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ is that of **PROPHECY**.

Now when we think of prophesy, we think of telling the future, but that is not what this word means. You see, Paul doesn't use the Greek word KERUSSO here, which speaks of "preaching" but PROPHETEYO (prof-ate-yoo'-o) which carries with it the idea of speaking under inspiration, and Paul is going to explain this gift more as we read on.

But the general idea is bringing forth the Words of God to people and, as we will see, it is an important gift!

VERSES 2-3

The Greek word translated "**tongue**" is GLOSSA (gloce-sah') and it means speaking in an unknown language, a language that you don't know.

It could be a foreign language or an ancient dialect or even a heavenly language as we are told in I Corinthians 13:1.

Pastor Chuck Smith puts it like this, "Tongues express the overflowing worship of my spirit and the praise from my heart that I feel toward God."

In many Pentecostal churches you will see this gift exercised often and yet the primary purpose of this gift is our worship of God, not speaking to man.

And if it is exercised in the church, we are going to see that the gift of interpretation must also be exercised, or this gift is not to be exercised. We will deal more with this gift as we move on.

And this is so important for us to understand. You see, if we misunderstand this, we misunderstand what really happens when someone attempts to interpret a tongue and addresses his or her message to men. A true interpretation of the gift of tongues will be addressed to God, not men. It will be a prayer, praise, or some other communication to God.

Now in contrast to tongues, which we don't understand most of the time, the gift of prophecy is to build up, encourage, and comfort the people.

You see, if love is the motivating force in your life, tongues will be used mostly in your private devotions and prophecy in the church, among the people! Again, Paul is going to show the difference of the two as we read on.

But let me just show you the importance of prophecy. And please understand, this is not new doctrine, it is speaking forth the Words of God!

First Paul speaks of *EDIFICATION* – and this is speaking of building up and encouraging.

Then he speaks of *EXHORTATION* – and this is speaking of instruction, correction, or even rebuking with the intent to move you to action.

And lastly, *COMFORT* – and this is speaking of soothing a person, to remind the person that God is still on the throne and that He loves them and hasn't deserted them.

VERSES 4-5

I do understand that there is a lot of controversy with the gift of tongues and some are very harsh against the use of this gift. And they really have to go to great lengths to try and deny this gift.

One of them is John MacArthur. He believes Paul is speaking sarcastically here, and he says, “Because even true tongues must be interpreted in order to be understood, they cannot possibly edify anyone, including the person speaking, without such interpretation. They cannot, therefore, be intended by God for private devotional use, as many Pentecostals and Charismatics claim . . . Why, many people wonder, did Paul say I wish that you all spoke in tongues? . . . Paul was wishing them the impossible for the sake of emphasis.”

That is not at all what the text is saying here or what Paul is saying here. It is interesting to see how far people will go to disregard the sign gifts.

Then how does tongues edify the person speaking in tongues?

Tongues reaches beyond the human intellect and helps us to pray, to praise, to intercede beyond our own ability, the Spirit does this for us and as it happens, we are strengthened in the faith.

Thus, the gift of tongues is the best gift for our private devotional time with the Lord and the gift of prophecy is the best gift for our time in the church. You see, desire the best gift for the situation you are in.

Now, here is an important question that we need to answer. ***“Does everyone speak in tongues?”***

Like I have said, some would go to the extreme and say that if you don’t speak in tongues you are not even saved! That is just plain foolishness.

Then what is Paul saying here? I don’t think it is that difficult. He is saying ***“No, not at all speak in tongues!”*** for he tells us **“I wish you all spoke with tongues.”**

If you do that is great, if you don't, that does not make you less spiritual, not at all. The Spirit gives to us as He wills, we can ask because it is a beautiful prayer and praise language unto God, but then it is up to the Holy Spirit to give the gift to us!

And let me bring this out, even though Paul spoke heavily on this in I Corinthians chapter 13. But listen carefully. A Christian who doesn't speak in tongues but demonstrates agape love is showing more evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit than someone who speaks in tongues but manifests a critical, divisive heart and no love.

I think that is clear!

VERSE 6

Do you see how important I Corinthians chapter 13 is, the love chapter in regard to the exercising of these gifts!

There is no profit to the hearer unless he understands what is being said.

And yet, you will see tongues exercised in church and many times multiple people speaking in tongues, and that is wrong.

Paul is going to give to us some illustrations to drive home his point about how important prophecy is to a church and not the gift of tongues in a public setting unless there is an interpreter!

VERSES 7-9

This is a very important point here. When you go to a concert, you expect to hear a song that has a melody, that is in rhythm.

But, have you ever heard a child banging on the piano keys before? Yes, there is a sound that comes out, but it is very unpleasant.

Also, have you ever noticed at a concert for the really young kids, how all their songs sound alike! It is kind of funny.

But here is the thing. When someone knows how to play the piano, beautiful music comes forth.

Thus, if someone speaks in tongues it may edify them but no one else, it will be like a child banging the piano keys!

To show how this is played out Paul uses another illustration. You see, in the military there are certain sounds the trumpeter makes to call the men to battle, to call them to retreat, to wake them up and you better play the right one! Or, if the sound can't be understood, it is just as bad.

Can you imagine that instead of a call for battle, the bugle man plays "Flight of the Bumble Bee!"? That would not be good.

The same is true with tongues, an uncertain sound that does nothing for those who are hearing it.

And the way Paul lays this out, his point is simple. We are to speak words which people can hear and understand for it will edify them, exhort them, and comfort them.

VERSES 10-11

This is a problem for those who believe in evolution. Because, like it or not, believe it or not, language itself is a gift from God. We can communicate with language because we are made in the image of God.

Even modern linguists know man could not have invented language, any more than we could have invented our own circulatory system.

Most modern linguists who reject God believe language is so unique that it “must” have been part of a unique evolutionary process.

It’s far more logical to believe God created man with this unique capability, as part of creating man in His own image.

Now let’s look at Paul’s point here.

Have you ever tried to speak to someone who didn’t understand English and you didn’t understand the language they were speaking?

I have and it is very frustrating.

What you end up getting is a big smile and their head shakes up and down, but they have no clue what you just said.

Like I have said, language is amazing, evolution can’t explain it and many feel there was one language that spread out and changed over the years.

Now just because we don’t understand the language doesn’t make it bad, in fact those that understand it will benefit from hearing it.

The same is true with tongues, if you can’t understand it, then it won’t benefit anyone except the one who is speaking it.

And, of course, God understands it for it is primarily but not exclusively praise unto Him!

Paul used three examples here to show the importance of prophecy over tongues. He spoke of musical instruments; a trumpet used in battle; and everyday conversation to prove his point that unless sounds have meaning to the people that hear them, they are meaningless and therefore useless.

VERSES 12-14

In other words, to speak in tongues in a public meeting when no one understands what you are saying is useless for the building up of the body.

Now, if there is the gift of tongues being exercised in a church setting there must also be the gift of interpretation of tongues.

Probably some 20 years ago or so, as we were preparing for one of our summer concerts, there was a man who was a Christian who came up to me and another brother in the Lord and he told me that he had a word from the Lord for me.

So we listened and all of a sudden he started speaking in tongues, he stopped and then he walked away.

The gift of interpretation was not in operation and the word from the Lord I have no clue to what it was all about. And what you see when it is not exercised properly is confusion, uncertainty, no edification, no exhortation, no comfort! Thus, speaking in a language I could understand would have been better!

Also, the gift of tongues is not about me, it is about the Lord and thus, I don't know what he said, and he was really messed up in what he was doing. It was not from the Lord!

And please understand that in the exercising of this gift the Holy Spirit is not going to overpower you at the doctor's office, or anywhere else for that matter, and you will all of a sudden begin to speak in tongues.

This gift is usually in operation as we are praying, as we are mediating upon the Lord and He puts those words in our mouth and we speak them forth by faith and it is a beautiful praise language unto the Lord!

VERSES 15-19

Why don't we just pray in tongues all the time?

Because we do need to know what we are praying for so that as God answers those prayers, He will get the praise!

Also, others can't agree with you when they don't understand what you are saying, they don't have a clue to what you are talking about!

Did Paul speak in tongues?

You bet he did and yet he would rather speak with words that people understood, love that brought edification, exhortation and comfort to others with the Word of God!

As we read on, we are going to deal with some very controversial verses and some very confusing or conflicting verses as you will see. And yet, God does not want us to be confused about these things and we will see that as we read on.

VERSES 20-25

Here in I Corinthians 14:20 Paul rebukes them because they were self-centered, they used the gifts to bring glory to themselves instead of building up the body of Christ, Paul says they are children, or they are selfishly immature!

Thus, Paul tells them to grow-up, act their age, be mature, put on the mind of Christ.

As you examine the life of Jesus, He was others-centered instead of being self-centered!
Great example to follow!

Now, here in I Corinthians 14:21-25, we find some of the most difficult verses to understand in the Bible because it seems that Paul is contradicting himself, that verse 22 contradicts what he says in verses 23-25!

This has caused so much trouble for some, that J. B. Phillips, the famous Greek scholar, when he was translating the Greek Scriptures to English, he thought there was a copyist error because it didn't make sense to him.

It seemed that Paul was contradicting himself. And so, in verse 22 he said it was correctly translated this way, that tongues are for those who believe, to fit in with the rest of what Paul said in these verses.

I don't believe there was a copyist error, I believe that Paul knew what he was saying, and it was translated correctly, and I will show you why!

We need to understand that Paul is using an Old Testament illustration from Isaiah chapter 28 to make his point here.

In Isaiah God is pronouncing judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the hands of the Assyrians and the Southern Kingdom of Judah by the hands of the Babylonians.

In Isaiah we are told that God sent them prophet after prophet who spoke to them in a language they clearly understood and yet they refused to listen, they refused to repent and get right with God, they refused to listen of the coming judgment if they didn't repent!

Thus, God said that He was going to send them another people who would speak a language that they didn't understand because they refused to listen to those whom they could understand.

And so the Lord sent the Assyrians to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Babylonians to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and judgment came upon them for their refusal to listen and obey.

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 14:20, **“Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding by mature.”**

Paul told them not to be children, to grow-up, to be mature, to understand these things.

You see, tongues are not a sign of spiritual maturity or even that God is among you, for God used unbelievers to speak to Israel and Judah as a sign of judgment to them.

Thus, tongues are a sign to religious unbelievers in that it speaks to them God's judgment that is coming upon them. The prophets are speaking words that they can hear but they refuse to listen, and thus they are condemning themselves by rejecting Christ.

Now keep in mind that as tongues are spoken in the hearing of unbelievers, most of the time it does not draw them to Christ, but pushes them out the door, they think you are crazy when they see this gift being exercised in front of them. Not all the time, but I would imagine most of the time they would freak out by what they see.

Prophecy, on the other hand, speaks to believers that God is among them, the Word of God, as it is being taught it ministers to people.

Now the illustration may be a little confusing, it may be a little cloudy, but Paul draws his conclusion of this illustration beginning in verse 23 of I Corinthians chapter 14 when he says, **“Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”** I Corinthians 14:23-25.

Tongues, in general, does not minister to new believers or unbelievers. As I have said, many times they will think you are nuts, that you lost your mind!

Therefore, in a public gathering, when you have new believers and unbelievers together, prophecy, the teaching of God's Word, is the gift that needs to be exercised.

You see, prophecy cuts right to the heart of the matter, as Paul said in Hebrews 4:12-13, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”**

Thus, prophecy in a public setting and tongues in a personal setting is the general rule!

VERSE 26

I find it amazing the number of Christians, the number of churches, the number of denominations that will use these verses here in I Corinthians to see this as the normal practice in the church today. Some have even gone to the extreme to say that there should be no pastors or formal teaching, but *EVERYONE* should be able to say or do whatever they feel the Holy Spirit is prompting them to do or say! That is foolishness. Sorry, but if that is what someone gets out of this, then they are making the Scriptures say what they want them to say and not what God is saying!

First of all, we need to remember that the letter to the Church in Corinth was a very early letter. The date of Paul's writing of this letter is somewhere between A. D. 54 to A. D. 56 and Paul wrote this letter when he was in Ephesus, on his third missionary journey, after receiving a letter and by word of mouth from Corinth telling Paul of the difficulties they were having, and Paul writes back to help correct their errors.

That means that the Bible was not completed yet, many of the letters were not being circulated to the many churches to read yet.

In fact, let me share this with you. We are told,

There is some debate on when the Bible was completed. Some claim that the Bible was completed when the Council of Nicaea 'picked' the books to include in the Bible. This is false.

That council, convened in AD 325 by Constantine - the newly minted 'Christian' emperor - merely affirmed for the emperor's new official religion what Christians already had been reading as the completed Bible for over two centuries. In fact, the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John began to be stitched together in the first century AD to distinguish them from the many dubious writings that had begun to circulate.

The Bible was completed in late 1st century AD when God used John, the last surviving Apostle, to close the last book of the Bible with this stern warning:

"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

(Revelation 22:18-19)

- <http://bit.ly/2Tv95FS>

Because the Scriptures, the New Testament was not put together yet, it was not completed yet, what would happen is that on a Sunday, someone would read a Psalm, another would teach, someone would speak in tongues and there would be an interpretation, someone may give a revelation.

Nothing wrong with that and yet, the problem was their selfishness, their lack of love, their desire to be heard and it caused a mess in the church. I guess you could say they were jockeying for position in the church, they wanted to be heard and show how spiritual they were.

Because of all that confusion Paul tells them, “**Let all things be done for edification.**”

Think about that for a minute. If everyone is speaking at the same time, there is no edification only a lot of noise!

You see, the goal of coming together as a body of believers is not entertainment, but for the edification, being built up in the Spirit by the Spirit of God and the Word of God!

Then why don't we practice this today?

Because we have the completed Word of God and as you read on through the Pastoral Epistles, the focus is on the teaching of the Word of God and not the gifts. I am not saying that the gifts are not in operation, they are. And we will deal with that as we move on.

What I want to show you here is that the Word of God has to be the center of what the church is about because it is the Word of God that tells us what is right, it tells us what is wrong, it tells us how to get right when we have gone astray and it tells us how to stay right. The Word of God reveals Jesus to us!

In I Timothy 3:14-15 Paul wrote, “**These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**”

Not only does the church have God's truth but also it is the vessel that God uses to proclaim it to the world!

And Paul says that the church is “**the pillar and ground of the truth.**”

First of all, a pillar is a supporting structure and we hold up God's Word to the people of this world.

The ground speaks of the foundation and it is also a supporting structure and this world rests upon one of two foundations, the truth or the lie.

But if the foundation is weak, the structure will be unstable.

Thus, to bring stability to the people of this world, we need to bring them the truths of God found in the Word of God!

And yet, when you look at the church today, it is doing the exact opposite. It ends up bringing the philosophies of the world into the church and thus, we should not be shocked how weak the church is today. We should not be shocked that the church doesn't understand right from wrong.

Remember what Paul warned Timothy in II Timothy 4:1-5, **"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."**

A pastor's responsibility is to ***PREACH THE WORD!*** To build people up in the faith. And yes, the time will come, and I believe has come when people don't want to hear God's Word because they have itchy ears and they want a message to feel good, to feel happy instead of being transformed by God through His Spirit in accordance to His Word!

And the warning to Timothy is simple. Don't let the people influence you to do things that are focused outside the teaching of God's Word. That is your ministry, fulfill it!

And, as I have said, I will deal with these gifts and when they are to be used today and why we don't see them on Sunday mornings or Thursday evenings. Well, that is not exactly true, we do see the gifts being exercised during these services, but not all of them and you will see why. Let's read on.

VERSES 27-28

Here we see Paul lay the ground rules for speaking in tongues.

Why did he have to do this? Because everyone was speaking in tongues at the same time and it was chaos. There was no order to it, none at all.

So he tells them that at the most there should be only three people that speak in tongues in a church service, and not at the same time.

But there also needs to be the gift of interpretation and if there is not, then the gift of tongues is not to be used in the service, it is not to be exercised!

Now, in saying that, why don't we see the gift of tongues in operation on Thursday evenings or Sunday mornings here at Calvary?

First of all, tongues are used in our private devotions, but as I said, not exclusively!

Also, because during the worship time we are worshipping God so why would God interrupt the worship of Himself?

And, during the teaching of God's Word God is speaking through me with the gift of wisdom, knowledge, teaching and-so-on.

Thus, again, why would God interrupt Himself during the teaching? He wouldn't!

What about the gift of tongues being exercised in service here at Calvary?

It can happen during our praise, prayer and worship nights that we have on Thursday's periodically. That is when the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation is to be in operation. Remember, tongues is praise and worship unto God, not "*Thus says the Lord . . .*"

So we exercise the gifts of the Spirit here at Calvary and for some, they think we are too charismatic. And for others, they think we are not charismatic enough. Perfect, right in the middle and as Paul said, we "**. . . Let all things be done for edification.**" As well as in order!

VERSES 29-33

Here we see that even the gift of prophecy is to be regulated in the church. Paul tells them that only two or three were to speak and then what they said is to be judged to see if it is of God or not, if it contradicts the Word of God or flows from the Word of God!

Several years ago now, Benny Hinn got this revelation from God and said that when your loved one dies, don't bring them to the funeral home but prop them up in front of the television and put on TBN and God will raise them from the dead!

Yes, I do believe that on most of the programs that are on TBN you have to be brain dead to watch them, but that is not what he meant! Sorry, but the foolishness that goes on there.

And here is the thing. Did anyone challenge this statement, judge to see if it is from God? No, they believe it is Gospel truth when it is far from it!

Has anyone be raised from the dead being propped up and watching TBN after they died? Absolutely not! So why do people listen to this false prophet? Very said. And it is very dangerous.

And I have told you this many times, when I teach, you should be checking out what I am teaching to see if it is true, to see if it lines up with the Word of God!

In I John 4:1 John tells us, **“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“Dearly loved friends, don’t always believe everything you hear just because someone says it is a message from God: test it first to see if it really is. For there are many false teachers around.”**

And people fall prey to these things all the time. Listen to Paul’s warning in Galatians 1:6-9, **“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”**

Paul also says here in I Corinthians that, **“... the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”**

The Amplified Bible tells us, **“For the spirits of the prophets (the speakers in tongues) are under the speaker’s control [and subject to being silenced as may be necessary].”**

The Living Bible tells us, **“Remember that a person who has a message from God has the power to stop himself or wait his turn.”** I Corinthians 14:32.

That means you still have control even though some say, *“The Spirit made me do it!”*
That is not true, we have control over it!

Here is another important way to test to see if it is of God or not. Is there confusion, is there disorder in the church? If there is, then it is not of God!

Now we have touched on this a little already, but how is the church to function today? Are we to have people getting up during the service to speak in tongues, several people read a Psalm, give a revelation and-so-on? No, not at all!

As I have said, to understand what the church is to be about you need to look at the pastoral epistles, I & II Timothy and Titus to find out.

Remember what Paul said in I Timothy, that the church is the pillar and the foundation of the truth! That means that the primary focus of the church is the teaching of the Word of God!

In I Timothy 4:6 we are told, **“If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.”**

In I Timothy 4:11-13, **“These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”**

In II Timothy 3:13-17 we are told, **“But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

That is why we teach the Word of God, verse-by-verse through the whole Bible, from Genesis through Revelation here at Calvary Chapel.

We believe that the Word of God is living and powerful and able to transform our lives.

Do we believe in the gifts of the Spirit?

You bet we do, and they are exercised here at Calvary Chapel in a powerful way.

The thing is, often these supernatural gifts are exercised in such a natural way that people miss them, they negate them, but they are being used for the edification of the body of Christ!

Now, can I skip these next few verses? I think the men want to hear this, ladies, maybe not too much. But I think the reason it is so controversial is because many miss the point that Paul is making here, and they use it to justify something that is not of God. Look at what Paul said.

VERSES 34-35

As I have said, this verse has caused much confusion in the church and that is not of God!

What is Paul talking about?

It seems that the Corinthian church took up the practice of the Jewish Synagogues where men and women, husbands and wives would sit apart, on opposite sides.

Thus, if they didn't understand something some might call out to their husbands and ask them during the service and cause confusion.

In fact, Alan Redpath points out that Paul uses the ancient Greek verb *laleo*, which means, "to talk, question, argue, profess, or chatter."

Redpath says, "It has nothing to do with prophecy or prayer; it is not public speaking as such."

So it is not that women are not to talk in church, that is not the issue.

But I also do need to bring this up and I think it is very important.

Women are not to be pastors, that is not their role.

I am sorry, that is not my view, that is what God has said.

The problem though is some have removed women from any kind of service in the church and Paul is not saying that.

In fact, Paul said they can pray, they can prophesy back in I Corinthians 11:1-16.

But they are not to be pastors and Paul makes that very clear in I Timothy 2:11-12 as he says, **“Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.”**

Also, in the section on the qualification for a pastor Paul says, **“husband of one wife.”**

So I think that is clear, it is not to say that women are inferior to men, that is just the role that God has established and the blessing is found in being obedient to what God has said.

One more point before we move on and that is in verse 35 where Paul says that the women should ask their husbands when they get home! Why is that?

I believe Paul said that because of the confusion it would cause during the church service and the husband is to be the spiritual leader of the family. And by going to others you are taking that role away from him, you may even discourage him, and in the days we are living in where few men take on the role of being the spiritual head of the family, we need to encourage them as much as possible!

VERSES 36-38

Here we see Paul wonder if some of the Corinthian Christians wanted to contend with him on these matters. If so, he will have none of it.

You see, the Word of God did not come from the Corinthian Christians; it came to them from Paul. They need to sit and listen and be teachable instead of contending with the apostle Paul.

Warren Wiersbe put it like this, “In these verses, Paul was answering the church member who might say, ‘We don’t need Paul’s help! The Spirit speaks to us. We have received new and wonderful revelations from God!’ This is a dangerous attitude, because it is the first step toward rejecting God’s Word and accepting counterfeit revelations, including the doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1ff). ‘The Word did not originate in your congregation!’ Paul replied. One of the marks of a true prophet is his obedience to apostolic teaching.”

Because of that, Paul is saying that if anyone had a problem with what he was telling them, then they are just plain fools, they are ignorant!

You see, what Paul said was the Word of God, not his opinion.

Now some will try to negate what Paul said, ignore what Paul said, say that the Spirit gave them a new revelation, but that is wrong. God does not contradict Himself or change His mind! He knows the beginning from the end!

It is as the Lord told Joshua, **“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”** Joshua 1:8-9.

God says what He means and means what He says, the question is, ***“Do we believe Him?”***

VERSES 39-40

Paul now sums things up for us. Tongues are not bad, but prophecy is better during a church service for the people will be edified, exhorted, comforted by the Word of God!

Make no mistake about it. God is a God of order, not disorder and chaos!

We look at how some church services are, how some exercise the gifts of the Spirit today, and it is embarrassing.

In fact, I remember back at Calvary Chapel of Elk Grove there was a couple coming to our church from a Pentecostal church in which their services were so chaotic, so bizarre that they would never invite anyone to their church because of it, they were embarrassed!

But at Calvary they were very comfortable inviting people because things were done decently and in order!

I also have video of conferences where people are running up and down the aisles, they are laughing uncontrollably, they are slithering off their seats onto the floor, they are drunk in the Spirit, they are glued to the floor, and there is no order, no one is being built up but there is truly much confusion. That is not of God!

Of this Clarke tells us, “How often is a work of God marred and discredited by the folly of men! For nature will always, and Satan too, mingle themselves as far as they can in the genuine work of the Spirit, in order to discredit and destroy it.”

How many people discredit the gifts of the Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit upon our lives because of the bizarre stuff they see that is not of God! May we enjoy what God is doing and use the gifts to build up the body of Christ!

As we close this section, let me leave you with just a few verses to think about.

First of all, Jesus said in Luke 11:9-13, **“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”**

And looking at some verses in I Corinthians 12, 13 and 14, putting them together, we see Paul tell us **“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all . . . But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills . . . But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way . . . Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal . . . Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy . . . For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints . . . Let all things be done decently and in order.”** I Corinthians 12:7, 11, 31; 13:1; 14:1, 33, 40.

God is a God of harmony, of beauty, of order and thus, we as His children should reflect those qualities in our lives as we walk in the Spirit, as we are empowered by the Spirit, as we exercise the gifts of the Spirit!

May we grow in the Lord, as Peter tells us in II Peter 3:17-18, **“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”**