

1 Corinthians Study 21

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-19

KEY VERSE—

“I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.”(14:5)

SUMMARY—

Paul does not discourage their desire for spiritual gifts, but encourages them to seek the greatest gift—love (13:13-14:1). Actually, the spiritual gift which they should pursue was the superior gift of prophecy (14:2-5). This gift benefitted the entire church more than any other. If the tongues were not understandable, then they were useless (14:6-19). He illustrates this point with the flute, harp, and trumpet. Without distinction in their sounds no one can recognize what is being played (14:6-9), without understanding the language, men cannot recognize what is being said (14:10-11). In their zeal to possess spiritual gifts, they should desire those gifts which would benefit everyone—otherwise no one was edified (14:12-17). Those words which can be understood are the only profitable words (14:18-19).

QUESTIONS—

1) Did Paul discourage the Corinthians’ pursuit of spiritual gifts (14:1)? Who should they consider in their pursuit of these spiritual gifts (14:3-5)?

2) What was accomplished when a Christian spoke in tongues?

⇒ 14:2a—

⇒ 14:2c—

⇒ 14:4a—

3) What was the function of prophecy (14:3)? How could prophecy accomplish these things?

4) Why was prophecy more important for the church than tongue-speaking (14:4-5)?

5) When was the only time that tongue-speaking was profitable for the church (14:6)?

6) What was the benefit of a tongue which no one could understand (14:7-9)?

7) What was Paul saying with his illustrations of the sounds made by the flute, harp, and trumpet (14:7-8)? How does that compare with his subject of tongue-speaking (14:9)?

8) Are these tongues just spiritual utterances, or are they actual, significant languages (14:10-11)? Is that the kind of thing which is happening today among people who claim to have the power to speak in tongues?

9) What were the results of speaking in tongues without an interpretation (14:9-12)?

⇒ 14:6a—

⇒ 14:9b—

⇒ 14:11—

10) In their zeal for spiritual gifts, what should they be even more zealous for (14:12)? What should they pray for then (14:13)?

11) Why should the tongue-speaker pray for interpretation (14:13)? If he is speaking or praying in a tongue, does he even understand what he is saying?

12) Without an interpretation, who can understand a tongue (14:2)? Can the speaker (14:14)? Can the listener (14:16)?

13) What is the profit of speaking in the spirit without understanding (14:14-17)?

14) Was Paul against the gift of tongue-speaking (14:18)? What was the important thing he stressed in this section?

15) Of all the spiritual gifts, where did tongue-speaking rank with the Corinthians? Where did it rank with God?