

The Royal Route to Heaven

1 Corinthians Chapter 14

In Chapter 14 Paul continues his instruction on spiritual gifts which began in Chapter 12. We have read about what the spiritual gifts are – a manifestation of the Spirit, and how they are to be used - in love, and now we learn about the proper use of them in the congregation. The chapter might be summed up by the last verse: *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* We will see that, again, Paul is addressing a specific problem in the Corinthian church, but the principal is very applicable to our church today.

Pray that this study will bring a hunger for all that God has for you, and the understanding of how to walk in it on the Royal Route.

Key Word(s)

Read through the entire chapter, looking for words or themes that are repeated. You might want to underline them in your Bible.

1. A word we find several times is “prophesy” or “prophesying.” How many times did you find this word?

Since it is important to have the correct definition for this chapter and context, we have given you a definition below. Consider this meaning as you read Chapter 14:

Prophesy is not foretelling, like the prophets Daniel or Isaiah, not predicting the future, but rather forth telling, giving forth edification and exhortation and comfort to men. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

2. A word found more often in this chapter than any other in 1 Corinthians is “edification”.

a. How many times did you find this word?

b. Write a definition for “edify” below.

3. Another word applied often is “understand” or “understanding.”

a. How many times did you find this word?

b. Write a definition for “understand” below.

4. Make note of any other words that are repeated or that you feel are significant here and include a definition.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5.

It is clear as Paul begins this section that his thoughts on love over gifts in Chapter 13 was not saying love instead of gifts. There is more to learn about the operation of the gifts, specifically in this section about prophecy and tongues.

1. The chapter begins in verse 1 with, “*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts...*” What does it mean to “*pursue love*”?

We can see from this verse that there is nothing wrong with a desire for spiritual gifts. The problem comes when that desire becomes an obsessive pursuit that ignores the more important Christian pursuit, the pursuit of love.

2. It is good to note that Paul thinks both the gifts and fruit of the Spirit are important, but we need to remember the difference between the two.

a. Spiritual gifts are bestowed upon us by the Holy Spirit. What does 1 Corinthians 12:7 say about this?

b. The fruit of the Spirit is the development of Christian character, and it grows by the Holy Spirit. What is the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23?

The most powerful effect of spiritual gifts come from out of a life that is governed by the fruit of the Spirit. The character of Christ being formed in them and at the same time spiritual gifts operating in their life.

3. The differences between prophecy and tongues is clearly explained in 1 Corinthians 14:2-4. Read these verses and write what you find about each under the proper heading below.

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Tongues</u>
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Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

4. 1 Corinthians 14:5 states, *“I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied...”*

a. From verses 2-4, why would he say he wished *“even more that you prophesied”*?

b. From verse 5b, what would make tongues in public beneficial? Why?

5. What does Romans 14:19 say that supports this?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:6-19.

This section explains why the gift of tongues is not always edifying in a public setting.

1. In 1 Corinthians 14:6, what gifts of the Spirit are mentioned that edify others?

2. Verses 7-11 give examples of the confusion of tongues. Choose one of the examples and explain it here.

3. What is the reason for being zealous for spiritual gifts given in 1 Corinthians 14:12?

4. The next verse, 1 Corinthians 14:13, states: *“Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”* From verses 14-17 explain why.

5. In 1 Corinthians 14:18 Paul says that *“I speak with tongues more than you all.”* Yet...

a. ...in the church what would he rather do?

b. Why?

Consider the power of these five words: **Jesus Christ died for you!**

Read 1 Corinthians 14:20-25.

1. What does 1 Corinthians 14:20 tell you about understanding?

We now must apply this understanding to the next 4 verses by considering the context of the references. Verse 21 is from Isaiah 28:11. In context, God spoke through Isaiah to the people in the Hebrew tongue and they didn't listen, so God sent the Assyrians against them and when they heard them speaking a foreign language in the streets it was a sign of God's judgment, but they still didn't listen. So when the foreign language, "*men with other tongues*", was spoken by the Assyrians in Isaiah's day it was a sign of a judgment.

2. This example was of other tongues spoken in the streets as a sign to Israelites who had stopped listening to God's words. What then does 1 Corinthians 14:22 tell of the purpose of tongues in public?

We can also look to Acts 2:1-13 telling of Pentecost. The tongues were a sign to some, but others thought them drunk. Peter's prophesy was powerful for the conversion of many, but that fits the purpose in the assembly below. Try not to let this confuse you as we move on to verse 23.

3. The first phrase of 1 Corinthians 14:23 gives us the context of the next few verses, so write the words that show us that we are now speaking of an assembly in the church.

a. What does 1 Corinthians 14:23 say about the effect of tongues in the church?

b. What does 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 say about the effect of prophesy in the church?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

As Paul concludes this section of the letter, we find specific correction and direction for order in the assembly. It seems, from verse 26, that the Corinthians were all speaking out, which could work in a very small home gathering, but in the larger assembly would result in confusion and chaos!

1. What reminder of the motive for the gifts of the Spirit do we find in the last sentence of 1 Corinthians 14:26?

2. How does Paul direct the use of tongues in the assembly from verses 27-28?

3. How does Paul direct the use of prophecy in the assembly from verses 29-31?

4. 1 Corinthians 14:33 again gives us the reason for these specific guidelines in the assembly. Write the first phrase of this verse below.

The next two verses can be misunderstood if not considered within the context of the times and culture of the day. It is generally understood that at this time the women sat on one side of the assembly and the men on the other. It seems that the women would yell across the church to their husband asking questions. We can see how this would be disrupting the peace and order, so Paul instructs them to ask their questions at home.

5. Paul reminds the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14:36-38 that he originally brought the Word of God to them and to others, then concludes this section with a summation of what he wants them to remember.

a. What instruction does Paul leave them with regarding tongues and prophecy in verse 37-39?

b. Write out the final exhortation from verse 40.

In closing...

1. Remember that this chapter began with the exhortation to “*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts...*” How would you explain this to a new believer?

2. Paul was addressing specific problems in the Corinthian church, but the principals apply to us. Why do you think the final exhortation, “*Let all things be done decently and in order*”, is important for us today?

3. Consider Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 14:19:

*“...yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding,
that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.”*

Now think of 5 words, or close to 5 words, that you might speak to someone that would express a truth that would edify the hearer and write them below.