

Strive to Excel in Building Up 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

#1: The Priority of Building Up the Church (14:1-5)

14 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ²For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

The Debate

Question: Does God continue to give the miraculous spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecy to the church today?

No. This position is known as *cessationism*.

Yes. This position is known as *continuationism*.

Continuationism

Pentecostal/Charismatic.

Third Wave

Open but Cautious

Definition of Terms

Tongues: A person speaking in tongues speaks directly to God in prayer and/or in praise (14:2; 14-17; 28).

²For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.

²⁸But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

Prophecy refers to a person sharing a word that God brings to mind that serves to build up, encourage, console, or teach a believer. It may also convict an unbeliever of sin, so that the unbeliever recognizes the presence of God in their midst and comes to faith in Jesus (15:3; 31; 24-25).

³On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,

²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

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On Prophecy:

Remember the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.

Remember that God is sovereign and active in the world.

On Gathering Together:

When we gather together, have building up your brothers and sisters on your mind.

#2: The Necessity of Intelligibility for Building Up the Church (14:6-19)

⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, ¹¹ but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹² So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

#3: The Necessity of Intelligibility for Reaching Unbelievers (14:20-25)

²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” ²² Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ the secrets

of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Final Exhortations

Be Grateful for the Gift of the Spirit

Pursue Love

Excel in Building Up the Church

Receive the Love of Christ When Others' Gifts Bless You

1. Pray that Unbelievers Would Become Worshipers