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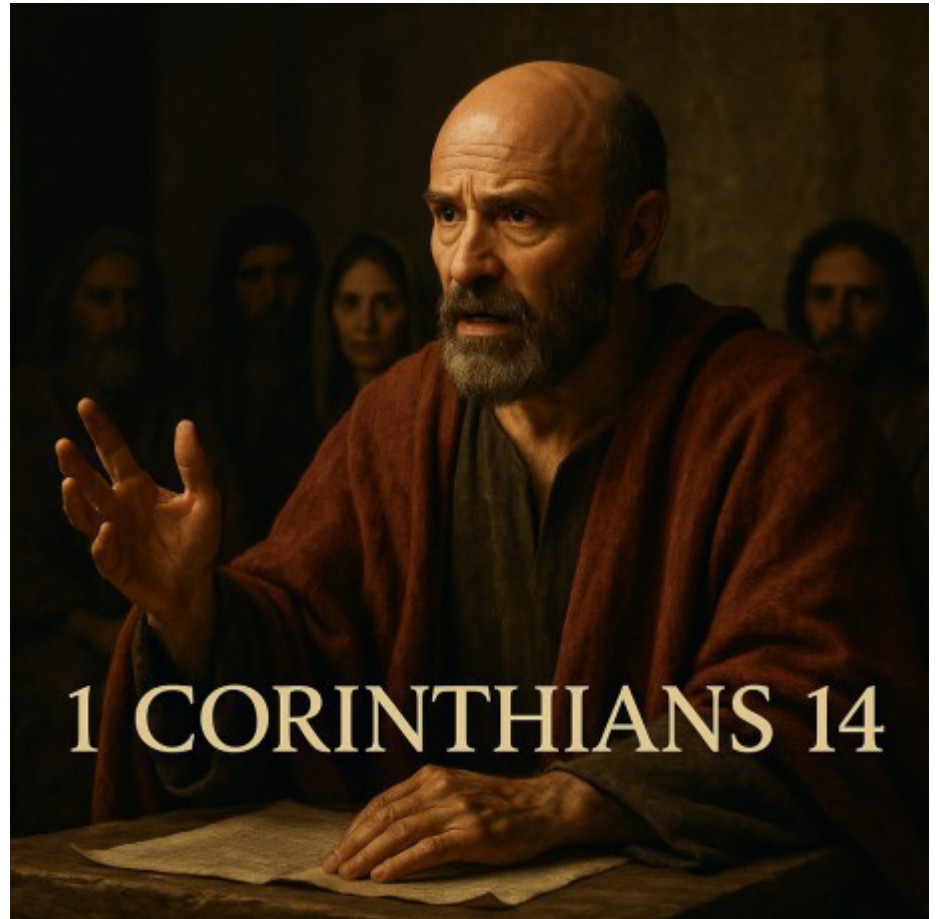
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**1 Corinthians 14**  
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By Dan Maines

**1 Corinthians 14**

**1 Corinthians 14:1**

Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

† Paul sets love as the foundation, then elevates prophecy above tongues for its ability to edify.

† The purpose of gifts is the building up of the church.

## **1 Corinthians 14:2-4**

For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people, but to God, for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, exhortation, and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.

† Tongues benefit the individual, prophecy benefits the congregation.

† The greater gift is the one that builds up others.

## **1 Corinthians 14:5**

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you would prophesy, and greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification.

† Paul does not despise tongues, but prioritizes prophecy for its clarity.

† Interpretation makes tongues useful, otherwise they are incomplete.

## **1 Corinthians 14:6-9**

But now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what benefit will I give to you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophecy, or of teaching? Yet even lifeless instruments, whether flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will what is played on the flute or on the harp be understood? For if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So you too, unless you produce intelligible speech by the tongue, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will just be speaking into the air.

† Unintelligible tongues are compared to meaningless sounds.

† Clarity and order are necessary for edification.

† Josephus (Wars 3.92) noted the clarity of trumpets in battle, illustrating Paul's metaphor.

### **1 Corinthians 14:10-12**

There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and none is incapable of meaning. So if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be unintelligible to the one who speaks, and the one who speaks will be unintelligible to me. So you too, since you are eager to possess spiritual gifts, strive to excel for the edification of the church.

† Language has value only when understood.

† Gifts must be exercised with the goal of building up.

### **1 Corinthians 14:13-17**

Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue is to pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unproductive. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind, I will sing with the spirit, but I will also sing with the mind. For otherwise, if you bless God in the spirit only, how will the one who occupies the place of the outsider know to say the "amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.

† Worship must be intelligible for others to join in.

† Without understanding, there can be no true unity in worship.

### **1 Corinthians 14:18-19**

I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all, nevertheless, in church I prefer to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

† Paul's priority is instruction and edification.

† Clarity outweighs quantity in teaching.

## **1 Corinthians 14:20-22**

Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking, yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written: "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord. So then, tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers, but prophecy is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe.

† Tongues functioned as a covenant sign of judgment to unbelieving Israel.

† Prophecy was given for the edification of the church.

† Isaiah 28:11-12 is Paul's foundation for this warning.

## **1 Corinthians 14:23-25**

Therefore, if the whole church gathers together and all the people speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are insane? But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or an outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

† Uninterpreted tongues bring confusion, prophecy brings conviction.

† The Spirit's work through prophecy reveals hearts and exalts God.

## **1 Corinthians 14:26-33**

What is the outcome then, brothers and sisters? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. All things are to be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it must be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one is to interpret, but if there is no interpreter, he is to keep silent in church, and have him speak to himself and to God. Have two or three prophets speak, and have the others pass judgment, but if

a revelation is made to another who is seated, then the first one is to keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn, and all may be exhorted, and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

† Order is essential for edification in worship.

† God's nature is peace, not disorder.

† Hippolytus (Apostolic Tradition 22) emphasized order in worship, reflecting Paul's instructions.

### **1 Corinthians 14:34-35**

The women are to keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they want to learn anything, have them ask their own husbands at home, for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.

† Paul appeals to order and submission within the assembly.

† This aligns with his earlier teaching on headship (1 Corinthians 11).

### **1 Corinthians 14:36-38**

Or was it from you that the word of God first went out? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

† Paul asserts his authority, reminding them his words are the Lord's commands.

† To reject apostolic teaching is to reject Christ's authority.

### **1 Corinthians 14:39-40**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But all things

must be done properly and in an orderly way.

† Paul concludes with balance, encouraging prophecy, not forbidding tongues, but commanding order.

† Love, edification, and order govern all things.

### **How it applies to us today**

† 1 Corinthians 14 teaches that love, clarity, and order are essential in worship.

† Spiritual gifts are for the building up of the church, not self-display.

† God's people must avoid confusion, seeking peace and edification in all things.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

### **Source Index**

† Josephus, Wars 3.92 - clear trumpets in battle

† Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians 32 - gifts useless without love

† Hippolytus, Apostolic Tradition 22 - order in worship

† Isaiah 28:11-12 - tongues as a covenant sign

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