

Studies In First Corinthians

(I Corinthians 14:1-11)

1. Did prophesying have a greater value than other spiritual gifts for the Corinthians?

Yes: "(1) *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy...* (5) *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church*" (I Corinthians 14:1; 5).

- Follow after love (Proverbs 15:9, I Corinthians 13:13, II Timothy 2:22, and I John 5:2-3).
- The desire of spiritual gifts came with an understanding that greater things were to come (I Corinthians 12:31 and I Corinthians 13:8-10; cf. James 1:25).
- Prophesying was most beneficial to others (I Corinthians 14:24-25; 39).
- Since prophesying edifies the church, this should show the significance (Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:16, Ephesians 4:29, and I Thessalonians 5:11).

2. Was it profitable for men to speak to men using an unknown tongue?

No: "*For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries*" (I Corinthians 14:2).

- There is a difference between speaking in unknown tongues here from the speaking in tongues that occurred when the first recorded sermon post the death of Christ occurred (Acts 2:1-11).
- Therefore, we must deduce there is a difference in speaking in tongues (Acts 19:6) and speaking in unknown tongues, which required a spiritually gifted interpreter (I Corinthians 14:27-28).

3. What did prophesying do for the hearer?

Edified, exhorted, and comforted: "*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*" (I Corinthians 14:3).

- "*Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church*" (I Corinthians 14:12).
- Likewise, we are to exhort [urge] one another (Acts 14:22, Hebrews 3:13, and Hebrews 10:22-25).
- Comforting one another (I Thessalonians 4:18 and I Thessalonians 5:14).

4. Who was edified through one speaking with an unknown tongue?

Just the speaker: "*He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church*" (I Corinthians 14:4).

- If it'd only edify oneself, why do it (Romans 15:2-3 and Philippians 2:4)?

5. Would it have been beneficial for Paul to speak to the Corinthians if he did not bring some revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or teaching?

No: *“Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine” (I Corinthians 14:6)?*

- All spiritual gifts were intended to help others (**I Corinthians 12:7**; cf. **Mark 16:15-20**).
- If someone could not be taught, what was the point (**Romans 10:14**, **II Timothy 4:1-5**, and **Titus 1:3**)?
- Our work needs to be profitable to others (**Titus 3:8**).
- If speaking in tongues did not reveal anything to anyone, then no good was coming about (**Romans 16:25-26**).

6. Are uncertain sounds profitable for anyone?

No: *“(7) And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? (8) For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle” (I Corinthians 14:7-8)?*

- We are in a spiritual battle (**Ephesians 6:10-12**, **I Timothy 1:18**, **I Timothy 6:12**, and **Jude 3-4**).
- One has to hear and understand the warnings (**Ezekiel 33:7-19** and **Colossians 1:28-29**).

7. Should we focus on speaking words easy to be understood?

Yes: *“(9) So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. (10) There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. (11) Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me” (I Corinthians 14:9-11).*

- **Proverbs 4:7**, **Proverbs 9:10**, **Nehemiah 8:8**, **Matthew 13:19**, **Matthew 15:10**, **Ephesians 5:15-17**, and **II Timothy 2:7**.