

Studies In First Corinthians

(I Corinthians 14:12-25)

1. What did Paul instruct the Corinthians to seek that they might excel in?

Edifying the church: *“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).*

- **I Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 4:16, and I Thessalonians 5:11-14.**

2. What were those who spoke in unknown tongues instructed to pray for?

To be able to interpret: *“Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret” (I Corinthians 14:13).*

- Remember that the Holy Spirit was the giver of spiritual gifts (**I Corinthians 12:7-11**).
 - The Father was the sender of the Spirit (**John 14:26**).
 - After H.S. baptism ceased, the Spirit was only given through the laying on of Apostle’s hands (**Acts 8:12-18** and **Acts 19:1-17**).
- Prayer was often made to receive gifts from the Holy Spirit (**Colossians 1:7-10** and **James 1:5-8**).
- Interpreting was more beneficial for the local church than speaking in tongues (**I Corinthians 14:5; 27-28**).

3. Did the one speaking in an unknown tongue understand what he or she was saying?

No: *“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful” (I Corinthians 14:14).*

- **I Corinthians 14:2.**

4. Should we seek to pray and sing with an understanding of what we’re saying?

Yes: *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (I Corinthians 14:15).*

- We need to not only understand what we’re praying, but also know it is in accordance with God’s will (**James 4:3, I John 3:22, and I John 5:14-15**).
- We MUST understand what we sing (**Psalms 47:7**).
 - We teach in song (**Colossians 3:16**). We must always teach the truth (**Titus 2:1**).
- Praying with the Spirit (**Ephesians 6:18** and **Jude 20**).
- Songs certainly did come from God too (**Psalms 32:7**).
- Whether in teaching, song, or prayer; holy men were moved by the Spirit to speak (**II Peter 1:21**).

5. Must we be concerned about whether or not unbelievers who may be assembling with us can understand what's being said?

Yes: *"Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest" (I Corinthians 14:16)?*

- To say amen is to say something is sure, trustworthy, or to confirm agreement "so be it" (Thayer) (**Deuteronomy 27:15-16** and **Psalms 106:48**).
- Prayers end in Amen (**Matthew 6:13**).
- Amen is not reserved solely for prayers though (**Matthew 28:20, Mark 16:20, Luke 24:53, John 21:25, Romans 1:25, Romans 9:5, I Corinthians 16:24**, etc.).
- The same Greek word translated "amen" [Strong's #281] is also translated as "verily" (i.e. **Matthew 5:26, Matthew 8:10**, etc. @ 101 times in N.T.).

6. Should we be concerned about the edification of others?

Yes: *"For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified" (I Corinthians 14:17)*. * See notes on question #1.

7. How important was it for Paul to understand what he was saying?

He would have rather spoken only five words with understanding than ten thousand without understanding: *"(18) I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: (19) Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (I Corinthians 14:18-19)*.

- Understanding your words is necessary for accountability if nothing else (**Psalms 39:1, Proverbs 13:3, Proverbs 15:28, Proverbs 21:23, Acts 20:26-27, and James 3:1-18**).
- For the record, a man could choose whether or not to allow the Spirit to speak through them (**I Corinthians 14:32**).

8. In what ways should our knowledge be immature?

When it comes to malice: *"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (I Corinthians 14:20)*.

- We need to be mature in understanding (**Psalms 119:97-100, Ephesians 4:14, and Hebrews 5:12-6:3**).
- Concerning malice (**I Peter 2:1-2**).
- Truly, there are some things we need to be childlike in (**Matthew 18:1-4**) and even naïve in (**Romans 16:19**).

9. Did speaking in miraculous tongues always convince people to believe in God?

No: *"In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord"* (**I Corinthians 14:21**).

- "In the law it is written" (**Isaiah 28:11-12**).
- Speaking in tongues did not necessarily convince people to believe (**Acts 2:1-13**).
- Miracles did not convince people to obey God (**Psalms 78:12-32**, **John 12:37**, and **Luke 16:31**).
- The power of conversion lies in the word of God (**Psalms 19:7** and **Romans 1:16**).

10. Were both tongues and prophesying for Christians to be edified?

No: *"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe"* (**I Corinthians 14:22**).

- Tongues were for unbelievers (**Mark 16:15-20**) while prophesying was primarily for believers (**I Corinthians 14:1-3**).

11. Would have been a different reaction if an unbeliever witnessed tongues in the assembly than if they witnessed prophesying?

Yes: *"(23) If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (24) But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: (25) And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth"* (**I Corinthians 14:23-25**).

- Even if speaking in tongues was curbed, unbelievers will often think Christians are nuts (**John 10:20** and **Acts 26:24**).
- A true prophet is hard to deny (**John 4:29**).
- Honest people, when they saw and understood what was going on, responded to miracles by falling down and recognizing truth (**Luke 5:1-11**).