

## Student Guide – 1 Corinthians 14: Truths Regarding Tongues

### Student Guide Church Talk – Exploring 1 Corinthians 14 – Understanding Tongues

**Purpose of This Guide** This guide is designed to help students engage with Paul’s teaching on spiritual gifts, particularly tongues, and to reflect on how these gifts should operate within the local church.

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#### INTRODUCTION

**Key Idea:** 1 Corinthians 14 is central for grasping Paul’s perspective on spiritual gifts. Studying chapters 12 through 14 together gives a complete view of their purpose and function.

**Reflection:** Why do you think Paul highlights love in the middle of his discussion on spiritual gifts?

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#### REVIEW: THE FUNCTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

**Main Truth:** Spiritual gifts are given to strengthen and serve the church, not for personal pride or display.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 12:29–31

**Discussion Questions:** • How does Paul illustrate the variety of gifts in the church? • Why is it important that not everyone has the same gift?

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#### THE GREATER WAY: LOVE

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13:8–10

**Key Points:** • Spiritual gifts are temporary • Love is permanent • Gifts remain until “the perfect” arrives

**Reflection:** How does love influence the way gifts should be expressed in the church?

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#### CHAPTER 14: TONGUES AND PROPHECY

Key Focus: Paul emphasizes love as the foundation, then contrasts tongues and prophecy.

Important Distinction: • Tongues for personal growth • Tongues with interpretation for the edification of the church

Why This Matters: Confusing these two functions can lead to misunderstanding the purpose of speaking in tongues.

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## I. CORPORATE EDIFICATION FIRST

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:1–4

Main Idea: Public worship should focus on what benefits the entire congregation.

Three Functions of Prophecy:

1. Upbuilding – strengthening the church body
2. Encouragement – guiding believers into God’s purpose
3. Consolation – comforting and reassuring the congregation

Reflection: Why might Paul prioritize prophecy over un-interpreted tongues in public gatherings?

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## II. PERSONAL EDIFICATION IS ESSENTIAL

Main Truth: Private edification remains important, even when the focus is on public worship.

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4–5 Romans 8:26

Key Points: • Tongues are directed toward God in prayer • They strengthen the individual believer • Paul encouraged all believers to speak in tongues

Reflection: How does personal prayer in tongues help a believer grow spiritually?

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## TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION

Key Insight: Tongues and interpreted tongues serve different purposes.

Biblical Examples: • Acts 2 – no interpreter needed • Acts 10 – Spirit fell on Gentiles • Acts 19 – believers spoke in tongues and prophesied

Discussion: What do these examples teach about the role of interpretation in tongues?

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## SPIRIT AND UNDERSTANDING TOGETHER

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:13–15

Key Truth: Prayer and worship should involve both the Spirit and the mind.

Application: How can you engage both your spirit and understanding in prayer and worship?

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## III. THINKING OF THE UNBELIEVER

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:16–19

Main Idea: Mature believers consider the impact of their worship on outsiders.

Reflection: How should a church balance personal spiritual experience with accessibility for those who are not yet believers?

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## TONGUES AS A SIGN

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:20–25 Isaiah 28:11–13

Key Insight: • Tongues serve as a sign to unbelievers • Prophecy serves as a sign to believers

Think About It: How does understanding Isaiah 28 clarify Paul’s teaching on the purpose of tongues?

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## THE OUTCOME OF SPIRIT-FILLED WORSHIP

Results: • Conviction • Accountability • Awareness of sin • Repentance

Reflection: Why are these outcomes more important than personal expression in public worship?

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## FINAL INSTRUCTION

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:39–40

Key Takeaways: • Desire prophecy • Do not forbid speaking in tongues • Worship should be orderly and considerate

Personal Application: How can you pursue spiritual gifts while maintaining love, order, and humility in the church setting?