

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH?

PROPHECY & TONGUES

1 CORINTHIANS 14

17: What's the Deal with Prophecy & Tongues (1 Cor 14)

Prophecy & Tongues are 2 words that are often misunderstood & misused.

Today we ask & answer the question,
"What's the deal with prophecy & tongues?"

beourguest

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teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES

Prophecy & Tongues are 2 words that are often misunderstood and misused.

- ① Do you want to stay **IGNORANT** or at least explore what the Scriptures say on difficult subjects?
- ② What do **YOU** do when you are confronted with the correction of God's Scriptures?

CATCH THE CONTEXT

When Jesus returns, there will be no need for the spiritual gifts that reveal the mysteries about who Jesus is, because...Jesus will be **WITH US!** Even faith and hope will be no more. *The Object of our faith will be within our sight and all our heavenly hopes will be fulfilled* as we stand before our King! But **LOVE will continue** - it is **WHO** God is and **WHO** we should be.

☀ **NT Wright** "The point of 1 Corinthians 13 is that love is not our duty; it is our *destiny*. It is the language Jesus spoke, and we are called to speak it so that we can converse with him. It is the food they eat in God's new world, and we must acquire the taste for it here and now. It is the music God has written for all his creatures to sing, and we are called to learn it and practice it now so as to be ready when the conductor brings down his baton. It is the resurrection life, and the resurrected Jesus calls us to begin living it with him and for him right now."¹

Until Jesus Returns...

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (CSB)

Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy. For the person who speaks in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God, since no one understands him; he speaks mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, **the person who prophesies** speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation.

The Difference between *Tongues* and *Prophecy*

Tongues: Spirit-led speaking in a formerly unknown language, and unless known by another and interpreted, is only known to God, hence **the person who speaks in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God, since no one understands him**. Unless interpreted this person **speaks mysteries in the Spirit**.

Prophecy *IS* understood by other **people**. **Prophecy** rarely refers to predicting the future, but more often refers to speaking the truth of God to others, even when it's difficult. Prophecy results in **strengthening, encouragement, and consolation** for others; it also helps people **learn** who God is and what God says (1 Cor 14:31).

¹ Tom Wright, Surprised by Hope (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2007), 301.

Prophecy Greater Than Tongues?

1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (CSB)

The person who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but **the one who prophesies builds up the church**. I wish all of you spoke in tongues, but even more that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be built up.

Some refer to tongues as a 'prayer language' between God and an individual, accounting for how **a tongue builds himself up**. Whether or not tongues is a prayer language, tongues without interpretation does not help other people. But **the one who prophesies builds up the church** (not him/herself). So **the person who prophesies is greater** because what he/she says impacts others and not just him/herself. The one exception is when someone **interprets** the unknown language (tongue).

Do My Gifts Build Up the Church?

1 Corinthians 14:6-13 (CSB)

So now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, **how will I benefit you** unless I speak to you with a revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? Even lifeless instruments that produce sounds—whether flute or harp—if they don't make a distinction in the notes, how will what is played on the flute or harp be recognized? In fact, if the bugle makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle? In the same way, unless you use your tongue for intelligible speech, how will what is spoken be known? For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, none is without meaning. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me. So also you—since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, **seek to excel in building up the church**. Therefore the person who speaks in a tongue should pray that he can interpret.

Don't Disengage Your Mind in Prayer or Song

1 Corinthians 14:14-17 (CSB)

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What then? I will pray with the spirit, and **I will also pray with my understanding**. I will sing praise with the spirit, and **I will also sing praise with my understanding**. Otherwise, if you praise with the spirit, how will the outsider say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you may very well be giving thanks, but the other person is not being built up.

Followers of Jesus are never told to disengage our minds to be spiritual. In this case we should **pray and sing with the spirit and with my understanding**.

The outsider isn't referring to a non-Christian guest who just showed up, but to "someone without the gift" (Greek = "*how can someone who fills the place of the unlearned say 'Amen.'*")² It does no good to speak in an unintelligible prayer when others are around, because they can't pray and say "**Amen**" (means = to agree).

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 (CSB)

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; yet **in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, in order to teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue**.

Paul speaks in tongues **more than** anyone in Corinth. (Some debate between Paul referring to his ability to speak in other peoples' language [Greek, Hebrew, & possibly Latin] OR whether he means praying in tongues.)

Paul wants what he says to make sense to others. In the church - not talking about *WHERE YOU ARE* (i.e. a building), but *WHO YOU'RE WITH* - among the "assembly" of believers - **the Church** - Paul wants his words **to teach others** and build them up rather than benefit himself only.

WRITE YOUR OWN NOTES HERE

How is Tongues a Sign for Unbelievers?

1 Corinthians 14:20-22 (CSB)

Brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to evil and adult in your thinking. It is written in the law, *I will speak to this people by people of other tongues and by the lips of foreigners, and even then, they will not listen to me* [Isa 28:11-12], says the Lord. **Speaking in tongues**, then, is intended as **a sign**, not for believers but **for unbelievers**, while **prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers**.

›At first look, this is a VERY DIFFICULT passage to understand.

Tongues without an interpretation was **a sign** of judgment, (as during the time of Isaiah - quoted here by Paul - Is 28:11-12). Hearing the **tongues of foreigners** was *a vivid picture of Israel being invaded by the Assyrians and Judah being invaded by the Babylonians*.

- When the people of God wouldn't listen to what was clearly spoken in their own language by God's prophets, GOD conquered His people with foreign enemies who spoke foreign languages (tongues).

In Acts 2, **tongues** - with interpretation - was **a sign for unbelievers**.

- The 1st followers of Jesus were empowered to speak in **tongues** - languages unknown to them, but **KNOWN** to the **unbelievers** who heard them. To these unbelievers, tongues (these languages) weren't gibberish, but **KNOWN** to them - because **THEY** were the interpreters of what God miraculously said.

Acts 2:5-12 (CSB) Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because **each one heard them speaking in his own language**. They were astounded and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? **How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language?**

Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), Cretans and Arabs—**we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues.**" They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

- So the **tongues** they heard was **a sign** that caused them to ask, "How is it that you know our language?" - which allowed Peter to essentially say, "This was a God-thing."
- Those tongues were meant to be a BLESSING, not a CURSE of judgment, to all who would listen.

Prophecy, was intended to strengthen, encourage, and console Christians (1 Cor 14:3). Prophecy is speaking the truth of God to others in His power, helping people **learn** who God is and what God says (1 Cor 14:31).

Tongues Without Interpretation vs. Prophecy

1 Corinthians 14:23-25 (CSB)

If, therefore, the whole church assembles together and all are speaking in tongues and people who are outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? But if **all are prophesying** and some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is **convicted** by all and is **called to account** by all. The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result **he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you."**

If tongues aren't interpreted, then **outsiders** (someone without the gift) and **unbelievers** will say "**you are out of your minds.**" BUT...**prophesying** - meant for believers - can still make sense to unbelievers.

- 🔍 Churches were never called just to preach to unbelievers, but to **believers**. God CAN and DOES use prophecy with the church to impact unbelievers invited by believers!

- 🌟 **John MacArthur** "When tongues were misused, there was only confusion, frustration, and bewilderment. Unbelievers were repelled and believers were unedified. But prophecy edifies believers and evangelizes unbelievers. God is honored and men are blessed when His Word is clearly declared. Our desire should be that every service, every activity, everything that we say or do in the Lord's name will cause people to say **God is certainly among you.**³

WRITE YOUR OWN NOTES HERE

³John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Corinthians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 384.

Building Up the Church

1 Corinthians 14:26 (CSB)

What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. **Everything is to be done for building up.**

Everything is to be done for building up - strengthening one another, not separating one another; cooperation NOT competition.

The Rule for Tongues

1 Corinthians 14:27-28 (CSB)

If anyone speaks in a **tongue**, there are to be only two, or at the most three, each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is **no interpreter**, that person is to keep silent in the church and speak to himself and God.

Many people speaking in unknown languages (tongues) among the Church is NOT biblical. Those who say they are just 'praying in tongues' should keep it to **him/herself and God** and **keep silent in the church**.

The Rule for Prophecies

1 Corinthians 14:29-33a (CSB)

Two or three **prophets** should speak, and the others should evaluate. But if something has been revealed to another person sitting there, the first prophet should be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that everyone may learn and everyone may be encouraged. And the prophets' spirits are subject to the prophets, since God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, since God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

After **two or three prophets speak**, the **others** (possible other prophets/elders) **should evaluate** and discern if what they say lines up with the truth of what the Scriptures & apostles taught.

Women Silent in Church? Context Gives Clarity

1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 (CSB)

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should be silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but are to submit themselves, as the law also says. If they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home, since it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

The Old Testament **Law** is clear - men should lead in protecting their homes and family, and with their faith family. MEN must STEP UP and lead within the home & the Church. **Women** are to **submit** to the leadership of their **husbands** - within the home and within the Church.

Paul did not intend for women to be silent among the Church at all times.

1 Corinthians 11:4-5 (CSB) Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head dishonors his head. **Every woman who prays or prophesies** with her head uncovered dishonors her head*...

[* refers to her husband or father]

Paul has previously - in the same writing - commanded women to wear a head covering (a cultural sign demonstrating submission to her husband or father) when she **PRAYS** or **PROPHESES**. There is NO MENTION of this being the case when men are not present. **These women WERE allowed to speak by PRAYING or PROPHESYING** among the church. So, WHAT is Paul referring to here in 1 Cor 14?

The CONTEXT of this passage is found a few verses earlier where Paul says:

1 Corinthians 14:29 (CSB) Two or three **prophets** should speak, and the others should evaluate.

This evaluation, it is to be led by the men, the spiritual leaders of the home & church. **Women** were to **submit** to the male spiritual leaders in this evaluation process, as this was the mens' spiritual responsibility. Women weren't to ask questions about the prophecy and its legitimacy. Instead,

1. Women were to trust the spiritual men to evaluate the prophecy and ask the questions of the prophet.

2. Women were to save their questions to **ask their own husbands at home**.

✓ **HUSBANDS** 1) BE HERE and make sure to listen & evaluate what is being said 2) be prepared to help give spiritual insight to your precious bride & family!

Do You Disagree...With the Lord?

1 Corinthians 14:36-38 (CSB)

Or did the word of God originate from you, or did it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that what I write to you is the Lord's command. If anyone ignores this, he will be ignored.

Did the word of God originate from you, or did it come to you only? NOPE. **The word of God** originated with God revealing who He is to the Old Testament prophets, and then revealing Himself in the person of Jesus to the apostles. Paul is one of those apostles and he notes that he is not making this up, but following **the Lord's command**. Those who choose to **ignore** what Jesus says, **will be ignored** when they speak.

The Final Word on Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 14:39-40 (CSB)

So then, my brothers and sisters, **be eager to prophesy**, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But **everything is to be done decently and in order**.

Those who say that EVERYONE should speak in tongues without any interpretation AND those who say, "Tongues should never happen today" are both in Biblical no-mans-land.

❓ Instead, **will we bend our beliefs to fit the Bible**, instead of bending the Bible to fit our preconceived beliefs?

Feet to Faith

1. Read the Scriptures IN CONTEXT.
2. Consider what wise Bible teachers conclude (Don't reinvent the wheel), & then
3. LIVE what you read.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? You might need to look back in your notes to help explain your answer.
2. Why is prophecy a "greater" gift than tongues (when tongues are without interpretation)?
3. After hearing today's teaching, and how prophecy & tongues should be practiced, share about a time when you saw these gifts practiced correctly OR practiced incorrectly. How did these settings encourage/challenge you or frustrate/confuse you?
4. How did today's teaching help you to better understand what tongues is and how the gift is to be practiced?
5. **After reading 1 Cor 11:4-5a, 14:29, & 14:33-35**, how does the context help us to understand why & when women are to be quiet among the church? How do these passages also challenge men to be spiritual leaders in the home and in the church?
6. Share about a time when you read the Scriptures in context which caused you to realize you had been reading/interpreting it incorrectly. Was that difficult for you and what did you do about it?
7. What other questions has this teaching or discussion prompted for us to talk about?
8. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.**