

I. Introduction: Paul commanded the Corinthians to pursue love, above all else; but if they were to pursue any gift, they should desire to preach so that the church might be edified.

- A. Paul told the Corinthians that tongues are useless in the church unless they can be rightly interpreted so that the rest of the church might be built up.

II. The Edification of the Church (1 Cor 14:1-12).

A. The Preeminence of Preaching (v. 1).

1. Paul exalted love as the primary fruit of the Spirit that they should pursue, but if they were to desire a spiritual gift, they should pursue preaching.

B. The Practice of Tongues (v. 2).

1. Paul corrected the Corinthians about their defective understanding of tongues as a gift of ecstatic speech and denounced it because it didn't edify the church.

C. The Preference of Preaching (vv. 3-5).

1. Paul told the Corinthians that preaching was the preferred gift because it edified the church, encouraged the people, and comforted God's sheep.

D. The Pointlessness of Tongues (vv. 6-12).

1. Paul demonstrated the futility of speaking in unintelligible tongues by using the illustration of an instrument to show how tongues were not helpful.

III. Conclusion: Paul told the Corinthians they should pursue the gift of preaching instead of tongues because preaching edified the church and tongues only confused people.

Questions About: The Edification of the Church

1. What is the primary purpose of the church? (**Eph 4:11-16**) Why does God want us to grow up? (**Rom 8:29**) What is Paul's main point in this chapter? (**1 Cor 14:26**)
2. What did Paul tell the Corinthians to pursue above everything else? (**1 Cor 14:1**) What had they been pursuing? (**1 Cor 12:31**) What gift did he say was the most important gift? (**v. 1**)
3. Why did Paul say speaking in tongues was only speaking to God (or "a god")? (**v. 2**) Why did tongues involve "mysteries"? How had Corinth been influenced by paganism?
4. Why did Paul say that preaching was superior to tongues? (**1 Cor 14:3-5**) What word did Paul repeat 4 times in these verses? (**vv. 3-5**) Why was edification so important to Paul?
5. Why did Paul say he wished they all spoke in tongues? (**1 Cor 14:5**) Did Paul speak in tongues? (**v. 18**) Why did he argue that preaching was superior to tongues?
6. How does Paul illustrate that language must be understood to be of any value? (**1 Cor 14:6-9**) Why did Paul say that tongues could not edify by themselves? (**vv. 9, 27-28**)
7. What did Paul say was the purpose of languages? (**1 Cor 14:10-12**) How would Paul have sounded like a barbarian if his speech wasn't understandable and clear? (**vv. 11-12**)
8. Why did Paul spend so much time discussing tongues? What was Paul's primary concern for the church? (**1 Cor 14:26**) Why did he want to limit the use of tongues? (**1 Cor 14:26-33**)

Prayer

1. Ask God to give you wisdom to understand this issue of speaking in tongues.
2. Ask God to show you how you can help edify the church by using your spiritual gifts.