

# 1 CORINTHIANS

LEARNING TO LIVE BY THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

**“Untwisting Tongues”**  
***1 Corinthians 14:1-25***

**Remember—the Corinthian Christians were corrected on several carnal issues in this letter:**

- Divisions and quarrels
- Sexual immorality
- Lawsuits among believers
- Marriage and singleness
- Freedom in Christ
- Spiritual Gifts
- Love
- Tongues

**The practice of ecstatic utterances was common in many of the pagan Graeco-Roman religions of Paul's day, including those active in Corinth. Devotees of a god would drink and dance themselves into frenzies until they went into semiconsciousness or even unconsciousness—an experience they considered to be the highest form of communion with the divine. They believed that in such a drunkenness their spirits left their bodies and communed directly with the god or gods—the ecstatic speaking that often accompanied such experiences was thought to be the language of the gods. In the church at Corinth much of the tongues-speaking had taken on the form and flavor of those pagan ecstasies.**



**INTERPRETIVE KEY: The singular form “tongue” refers to pagan gibberish. The plural form “tongues” refers to the spiritual gift of speaking a known, understandable language.**



### 3 Markers that help you make sense of the gift of tongues

1. The Edification Principle: The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual abilities to serve God and edify one another.

**“Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.” Romans 14:19**

**“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.”  
Romans 15:2**



### 3 Markers that help you make sense of the gift of tongues

1. The Edification Principle: The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual abilities to serve God and edify one another.
2. The Clarity Problem: Edification cannot occur when what is said is unintelligible.

**This much we know...**

**When God says something, He wants it to be understandable.**





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1. The Edification Principle: The Holy Spirit gives believers spiritual abilities to serve God and edify one another.
2. The Clarity Problem: Edification cannot occur when what is said is unintelligible.
3. The Biblical Purpose: The spiritual gift of tongues is designed to be a sign to unbelievers.