

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 CORINTHIANS 13-14

This morning I'd like to start with a Top Ten List... [The Top Ten Spiritual Gifts Not Listed In The Bible...](#)

10) untwisting cellophane-wrapped candy during the sermon without making any noise... 9) teaching three year old SS by yourself... 8) holding a sneeze for the duration of a sermon... 7) correctly pronouncing the Bible's genealogies... 6) unlocking a car door in the church parking lot with a coat-hanger... 5) matchmaking single adults... 4) turning to OT books without using the table of contents... 3) passing communion trays one-handed... 2) clapping on beat...

And 1) coming up with funny jokes for a sermon...

Those are spiritual gifts NOT found in Scripture, but for the Bible's discussion on legitimate gifts the two most important chapters are 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

Yet at the close of Chapter 12 Paul tells the church at Corinth to "[desire the best gifts.](#)" All the gifts of the Spirit are beneficial, but spiritual gifts are not the most important issue in church life. There is "[a more excellent way...](#)" *The greatest of God's gifts is love!*

The Corinthian Christians were flaunting their gifts. They were *rattling off in tongues, and trying to act spiritual*, rather than loving their brother. Love was an afterthought. Yet Paul tells them, "[Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.](#)"

In Chapter 14 Paul will explain the value of the vocal gifts; tongues, prophecy, and interpretation, but first he says [divine language without divine love is just noise.](#)

Verse 2, "[And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.](#)"

Supernatural revelation - even mountain moving faith is futile compared to the power of love... You can have a juiced-up faith strong enough to bench press Stone Mountain, but it's worthless if not coupled with love.

Verse 3, "[And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.](#)" *You can die a martyr's death, and make impressive sacrifices along the way...* Travel to Iran, preach Jesus in the streets, get beheaded - and if you weren't motivated by love for Jesus and for people; then God remains unimpressed.

["Love suffers long..."](#) I'll never forget an interview I heard years ago on a radio program. The interviewer was talking to a mother who'd been diagnosed with cancer. She'd been given a choice... live out the rest of her days on the beaches of Acapulco. Enjoy the life she had left... or undergo numerous rounds of grueling, brutal radiation

and chemotherapy, with the slightest hope of extending her life maybe two to four years...

This lady chose to extend her life, *if only for one day*. Here's what she wrote to her three small children, "I've chosen to survive for you. And this has horrible costs, including pain, the loss of my good humor, and moods I won't be able to control. But I must try this, if only on the outside chance that I might live one minute longer. That minute could be the one in which you might need me when no one else will do. For this I intend to struggle, tooth and nail, so help me God."

"Love suffers long and is kind..." Love isn't harsh or mean. It's tender. "Love does not envy..." It never wants the blessing that God chooses for someone else. It reads the name tags on the gifts before it grabs one. It's happy for the person who gets the nicer gift...

"Love does not parade itself..." It doesn't show-off, or attract attention... It's "not puffed up..." Love is humble. It doesn't mind picking up a towel and washing dirty feet. *The purer the love the lessor the pride*. And love "does not behave rudely, does not seek its own..." Love never seeks to embarrass, but builds up the other guy.

In reminds me of the young bride-to-be who went to purchase material for her wedding dress. She asked for ***the noisiest material available***. The clerk thought this was an odd request... *until the young girl explained her reasons, "My fiancé' is blind and I want him to hear when I reach the altar so he won't be embarrassed*.

Love "does not seek its own, is not provoked..." As the NIV puts it, "keeps no record of wrongs." It doesn't hold a grudge. Love "thinks no evil..." It doesn't jump to negative conclusions. It gives the benefit of the doubt.

Verse 6, Love "does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails."

Never give up on love! Even when you tire of extending it - or frustrated over it's rejection - *keep on loving!* Reject lessor methods. Just keep loving people, loving people, loving people. **For love never fails!**

Verse 8, "But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away." In eternity, spiritual gifts will no longer be needed to compensate for the inadequacies we faced on earth...

We won't need **prophecy**. God will speak to us face to face... Or **tongues**, we'll be fluent in all languages... Or even **words of knowledge**, we'll know all truth...

Spiritual gifts are for time, not eternity. Verse 9 tells us, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." And the "perfect" he's talking about is the perfection and completeness of heaven.

Yet this is the verse the skeptics like to use to deny the continuance of spiritual gifts. They interpret "that which is perfect" as the NT. The word translated "perfect" means

“complete.” Thus, they conclude that when the NT canon was finalized, God pulled the gifts of the Spirit from circulation. They’re no longer needed.

Yet I couldn't disagree more! For starters the NT was never considered a total revelation. In 2 Corinthians 12 Paul mentions seeing things in heaven that were not lawful for him to discuss or write of in the NT... The seven thunders of Revelation 10:4 were heard by John, but he was prohibited from recording them in the NT... My point is *“that which is complete”* isn't the NT.

We won't enjoy perfection until we get to heaven. That's when spiritual gifts will cease - when we enter God's glory - then we'll no longer need these special gifts. For now, the gifts of the Spirit are standard issue!

Paul writes in verse 11, *“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”*

This is the verse a dad quotes every time he mows his lawn, and has to pick his kid's toys up from the front yard, *“when I became a man, I put away childish things...”* *And this is the verse we'll quote in heaven.*

One day we all will reach full maturity - spiritual adulthood. But that won't happen until we get to heaven. Then and only then, will spiritual gifts cease.

“For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” In the here and now we see dimly.

“Face to face,” and *“knowing as I am known”* are phrases that speak of our heavenly experience. Complete knowledge isn't a characteristic of this life. In the here and now there's no such thing as *spiritual hi-def*. Until we get to heaven the reception will always be a little fuzzy. If we had 20/20 knowledge we wouldn't have to walk by faith... *But we don't... and we do.* This is why we need all the supernatural help we can get.

Chapter 13 closes, *“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”* As the old song puts it, *“Without love you ain't nothing! Without love...”* Love is the most excellent way!

Chapter 14 begins, *“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts...”* There is a Christian denomination that adopted as its official policy toward spiritual gifts the phrase, *“Seek not, forbid not.”* Well, they should add, *“and get not!”* For if you *“don't desire you won't receive.”*

In Luke 11, Jesus told His disciples, *“Ask, and it will be given to you, seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”* When it comes to supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit we need to seek, and knock, and ask.

The gifts of prophecy, tongues, and interpretation are not just matters we **believe** - they're gifts to **receive!**

And Paul adds, *“especially that you may prophesy.”*

When legendary football coach, Bear Bryant, directed the Alabama Crimson Tide he would observe the team's practices from a tower overlooking the field. The Bear trusted his assistant coaches to instruct the team and follow the playbook, but when he wanted to address a particular situation he'd shout down with a bullhorn. **And the gift of prophecy is God's bullhorn!**

God is in heaven's tower and He watches us live our lives on the field. Our instruction is provided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, but there are occasions when God wants to address us specifically and personally, so He picks up His bullhorn and speaks to us directly.

Prophecy is **"instant inspiration."** It's like spiritual *texting*. It's like direct messaging from God Himself!

The Hebrew word translated **"prophecy"** means **"to bubble up like a fountain, or tumble forth."** The gift of prophecy is a message prompted by God's Spirit that flows *from my spirit - through my mind - out my mouth*. Prophecy is an extemporaneous, ecstatic utterance. God puts His words in my mind, that I speak by faith.

My mouth becomes God's mouthpiece. Amos 3:8 declares, **"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"** God's Spirit most often speaks to us in a still, small voice, but the gift of prophecy is compared to a lion's roar!

"For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries." The rest of Chapter 14 will contrast the gifts of prophecy and tongues. And here's Paul's first point, prophecy is a message *from God to man*, while tongues is *man talking to God*.

And if you've been involved in a hyper-Pentecostal church this is your first red flag. For often a tongue is followed by a supposed interpretation - *something like, "Thus says the Lord, listen to me..."* It's as if the utterance in tongues is God's Spirit speaking to the group. But this is not what the Bible says. Tongues isn't God speaking to man. It's man speaking to God.

Paul is clear, **"He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God..."** It could be the supposed interpretation was actually a prophecy from God, but if that's so, the tongue remained un-interpreted. **Tongues is man speaking to God, not God speaking to man.**

Verse 3, **"But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men."** Prophecy is often thought of as **"foretelling the future,"** but a word of prophecy may or may not contain a predictive element.

The purpose of God conveying a word of prophecy is **"edification, exhortation, and comfort..."** It **builds up, stirs up, or cheers up** - whichever is needed most.

After we married, for two years Kathy and I struggled to have kids. On the last weekend of May, 1982 - at a conference we attended - Kathy requested prayer. As they prayed, one of the ladies prophesied over my wife. God spoke, **"By this time next**

year you will have a child.” Zach, my oldest son, was born on May 29, 1983. One year, to the day, the prophecy was fulfilled!

*And what kind of effect do you think this prophecy has had on our family? It's certainly **built up** our faith. It often **stirs up** Zack. What a legacy to know your birth was foretold directly by God... And it **cheers up** his parents to know that even in the difficulties and trials of life God has a plan and purpose for his life... *This is why Paul says desire spiritual gifts - and especially that you prophesy - for it **builds up, stirs up, and cheers up!****

Verse 4 explains why Paul prefers prophecy over tongues. “**He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.**” If no one understands the tongue - *or language spoken* - then it only just benefits the one who expressed it. Prophecy on the other hand is God's message to the whole Church. Everyone gets blessed by a word of prophecy.

“I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.”

I personally speak in tongues. It's a wonderful way to praise and worship God. Yet unless it gets interpreted it benefits only the speaker - not the rest of the church.

Verse 6, **“But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?”** In Acts 2, at the Feast of Pentecost, when the Spirit was first poured out on the Church, Jews from around the world had gathered in Jerusalem. It was a multilingual crowd. Each of the disciples were Galilean, yet the Spirit caused them to speak in a foreign language, unknown to them. And the listeners could pick out their own native language. Strangers heard God praised in their mother tongue.

Yet this was not the dynamic occurring in Corinth. The Corinthians were of the same community. They all shared the same language, so when someone spoke in an unknown tongue no one in the church knew what they were saying. In Corinth it was best to go to church and share a biblical insight that would teach or exhort.

He adds, verse 7, **“Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”**

In all messaging communication is the key! If hearers don't identify the dispatch what's the point? Bugles in battle direct the troops, but if soldiers don't recognize a charge, from a retreat; then the army will be defeated.

“So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him

who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.” Church gatherings should be all about clear communication.

Verse 12, “Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” Again, the Corinthians were enamored with spiritual gifts, but they had forgotten the purpose of those gifts! Like a baby sucking on a cell phone, they were missing the point of the cell phone! Church isn’t for self-centered entertainment, or to show off my super-spirituality, **it’s to build up the saints!**

“Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.” If you’re in a small group of believers, waiting on God in worship, and the Spirit prompts you to speak in tongues, and you do - *and no else in the group interprets what you’ve uttered*; then you, the person who uttered it, needs to pray for the interpretation. For if the tongue never gets interpreted no one can benefit from what was said. *And the purpose of any church gathering is the benefit of all.*

Verse 14, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.” Here, Paul takes a step back and helps us define what we’re discussing. He explains and defines the gift of tongues. “*If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays*” - but not my understanding.

The word “*tongues*” means “languages or dialects.” Thus, the gift of tongues is the Spirit-given capacity to praise God, or to pray to God, in a language other than my own native tongue, or any language I may have learned. Through the gift of tongues the Holy Spirit liberates me to praise God in a free and uninhibited manner. *I become fluent in worship!*

According to the Ethnologue website there are 7,151 living languages in the world today. Of those 7,151 languages, I know only one - English - and I know very little of it. The English language consists of 800,000 words (that’s excluding its 500,000 technical terms). In an average person's lifetime he or she will only get around to using about 60,000 of those 800,000 words. And worse, the daily working vocabulary of the average English speaker is only about 7,000 words. That means I use less than 1% of my one language.

This isn't a problem until I start to communicate a thought vital to me, and I can't find the right words to use. It’s frustrating to *go groping for words*. There are moments when even the most eloquent person among us gets caught off guard, *and is at a loss for words!*

And this *awkward articulation* occurs most often in emotional moments - when our hearts are full of love and joy - or grief and sympathy. You're about to burst out with pent-up emotions, but you can't find the right words to express what it is you're feeling deep inside.

At times I feel this toward Kathy. I try to communicate my love for her, but she’s heard, “*I love you*” so often it’s now blasé. *I can’t afford diamonds, so I’m stuck!*

This is also a problem that I have in my fellowship with God. *At times I'm awed by His presence, amazed by His love, blown-away by His blessing* - and when I want to praise Him most, *the speaker becomes speechless. "I love you"* just doesn't seem to cut it!

Humans are like this funnel. The narrow neck is our intellect. The wide base is our spirit. On the spiritual level we're capable of experiencing deep emotions, yet all that our spirit feels has to be channeled through our constricted intellect and very limited vocabulary. Our narrowness chokes off the flow of feelings, and bottles up our emotions. It creates a frustration of expression.

Yet here's where the Holy Spirit comes to our rescue. God's Spirit knows every language that's ever been spoken. According to 13:1 He's even fluent in the language of the angels. I'm *linguistically limited*, but the Holy Spirit is not. Therefore the Spirit can plant words in my mind - words I don't know, but that accurately and articulately express the depths of my heart.

And as those words enter my mind, by faith I speak them, believing them to be the Spirit's interpretation of my praise or concern! Through tongues I become *free and fluent* rather than *fumbling and frustrated*.

The gift of tongues bypasses my limitations - my mind and vocabulary. Notice how Paul puts it in verse 14, *"My spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful."*

Harold Horton explains it this way, *"The gift of tongues sinks a well into the dumb profundities of the rejoicing spirit, liberating a jet of long-pent ecstasy that gladdens the heart of God and man... Have you never in the presence of Jesus felt inarticulate on the very verge of eloquence?"* We need to ask God for this gift.

Verse 15, *"What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding."* I can pray, *or even sing* in tongues, or I can pray or sing in a language I understand. It all depends on the time and the place.

"Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified." Notice again, tongues is called *"your giving of thanks."* The gift is us speaking to God, not God speaking to us. It's always a *prayer* or *praise*.

And the idea here is that *time and place are crucial*. In essence, Paul is saying that the public gatherings of the church are not the place for the gift of tongues.

When the church opened up their meetings to anybody and everybody, the *"uninformed"* person (that Paul mentions) is present. This is either *an unbeliever, or a believer who simply doesn't understand the gift*.

And if the point of our meeting is to love and minister to this uninformed person; then why would I use a gift that I know he won't understand and can't appreciate?

This is how we view it at CC. Like in Corinth our public meetings are full of folks just getting started in their Christian life. If I started speaking in tongues, the novice would either be confused, or think I'm weird.

This is why Paul writes in verse 18, "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all yet in the church (or in the public assembly) I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Paul says he spoke in tongues more than anyone, yet he realized the gift wasn't for the public gathering of the church. Paul believed tongues was best practiced in a person's private devotional life, or in a small group of informed believers - not in the public gatherings where the church ran the risk of confusing a newbie.

He tells us in verse 20, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." In other words, spiritual gifts and common sense go together. A baby only cares about himself. And this is how some Christians behave. **But being spiritual is being sensitive to the setting.**

Now verse 21 is where the text gets a little tricky. He writes, "In the law it is written (in Isaiah 28:11): "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord. Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe."

At first, verse 22 seems to contradict what Paul just said. *I thought tongues were for the informed believers, but here we're told there's a sign to unbelievers?...* The key here is understanding the context of Isaiah 28.

The Prophet Isaiah had predicted Assyrian invaders would sack Jerusalem. The Assyrians spoke a foreign language. Thus, when the Jews heard this unknown tongue being spoken in their streets it was a sign that judgment had come. Thus, for them, tongues was a sign to unbelievers - **but it was a sign of judgment!**

So when an unbeliever enters a public gathering and hears someone speak in tongues - **and they become confused, it's a sign of judgment.** The unbeliever's uncomfortable reaction is proof of his unfamiliarity with the things of God. It's a sign he's been living alienated from God. You've heaped judgment on someone before they've had the opportunity to hear of God's love. *Why condemn them, before they can repent?*

Verse 23, "Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" The fact they freak out over the tongues, and think you're crazy, is proof they're unfamiliar with the things of the Spirit... But is that the first impression you want to make - *highlight their judgment* - or do you want to build a bridge that'll reach out with God's love? **Don't scare them, before you try to reach them!**

"But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you."

Though tongues is confusing to an unbeliever, prophecy is *clear*, and *compelling*, and *convicting*. In the church's public gatherings the gift of prophecy is preferable to tongues. A word from God utters truth, and people are **built up, stirred up, and cheered up**.

And the same happens when we teach Scripture, for it's nothing but prophecy that's been penned. Through it we all get built up. That's why at Calvary our public gatherings are devoted to the teaching of the Bible.

Verse 26, "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

Apparently, in contrast to large public meetings the Church at Corinth also loved to meet in small groups, that had an informal structure where everyone participated... you could come with a short teaching, or a revelation, or a song of praise, etc, etc.

It was a kind of a **spiritual free for all**, and that would've been okay if it had truly been "for all." But their gatherings were dominated by a few spiritual show-offs. Church meetings needed **some structure, some discernment, some restraint, and a whole lot of love!** So first, Paul adds in *the structure*, verse 27.

"If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret."

I've attended Charismatic meetings where everyone started speaking and singing in tongues simultaneously. It became a concert of tongues. *Yet our passage teaches that's not a biblical practice*. Each should take their turn. The use of the gift of tongues should be followed by an interpretation of that tongue.

"But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God."

So if there's no one present who can interpret the tongue; then that's enough of the gift for that moment.

Notice though a couple of points here... **First**, the person with tongues has the on/off switch. If there's no interpreter **let him keep silent - he can**. When you speak in tongues the Spirit provokes the utterance, but you still control the volume, reverb, and mute button.

I recall one misguided friend who was standing next to a co-worker where he was employed. He said he suddenly got the urge to speak in tongues, and blurted out. It scared his poor co-worker to death. And to make matters worse, he had the audacity to blame his impulsiveness and indiscretion on the Lord. He told me, "***I just couldn't help it! The Holy Spirit made me!***"

Paul is saying “no, the Holy Spirit doesn’t **force** you to speak.” He *enables* you, but you supply sensitivity to the situation. Too many times a beautiful meeting has been interrupted by an errant blast of tongues.

Jumping ahead to verse 32, Paul says of the gift of prophecy, “***the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.***” This also applies to the gift of tongues.

Verse 29, “***Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.***” Realize, the gift of prophecy, as with all the spiritual gifts, is subject to human error. In Jeremiah 14:14 the prophet states, “***And the LORD said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.”***”

Hopefully, people who prophesy *deliberate deceit* are few and far between, but we all can be *self-deceived*. Well-meaning believers can get worked up into an emotional lather, and mistake their own imagination for a message from God. This is why prophecies need to be judged. People have made major life decisions on what they thought was a prophecy - *which wasn’t*.

We need to put all prophecy to a test. ***Does it correspond with Scripture? And has it been confirmed to you by the same Spirit who gave it to him?***

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 provides us the balance, “***Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. (but) Test all things; hold fast what is good.***”

Verse 30, “***But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.***” Whenever someone speaks in the public gathering of the church, or in a small group, it needs to be done in a controlled and orderly manner.

Each person should show restraint and take a turn. The idea of our gathering is to learn from each other.

“***For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.***” The very first time you see the Holy Spirit in Scripture is Genesis 1:2. The earth is without form and void, until the Spirit hovers over the water, and brings order out of chaos!

Where there’s no order, people tend to get hurt. *You’ve heard of folks being stampeded at a soccer match. There’s no crowd control.* And this can happen in church. Where there’s no order needs go unmet. People get neglected when there’s no organization. God is into order because God loves people.

And speaking of order... Verse 34 tells us, “***Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak...***” Remember, Paul has already qualified this statement. In 1 Corinthians 11:5 he mentioned women praying and prophesying in church.

Apparently then, this is not an absolute prohibition. It doesn’t mean a woman should never open her mouth in church. Again, it comes back to time and to place.

It could be that in regards to the vocal gifts the ladies in Corinth were getting carried away, and were usurping the authority of the male leaders. The Corinthian women needed to remember what Paul had said earlier - in the church and home the men should *lovingly lead* and the women should *willingly let them*.

This is why he adds in verse 34, "**but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.**"

Angry and argumentative women are a blight on any church. Understand, If sisters clamor for leadership; the brothers will never step up. Boys are taught never to fight with girls. Thus, if ladies want to lead men will just let them. Men vacate. That's why whenever you see loving male leaders you'll find wise women who realized they needed to step back if their men were to step up. In spiritual matters God wants men to lead.

Verse 36, "**Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?**" The Corinthians thought of themselves as a special case. Paul reminds them that Christianity isn't their exclusive property. Corinth wasn't the birthplace of the Bible.

They were no exception and neither are we. Every church is subject to the truth Jesus taught the Apostles, and is now the NT. The truths Paul expounds apply to all churches in all generations. **No church is exempt!**

He closes Chapter 14, "**If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.**" Never doubt Paul's recognition of what he had written. He knew he'd penned sacred Scripture. So much so, he tells his detractors, *if you're really spiritual you'll agree that what I've written is the very word of God.* "**But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.**"

Finally, he sums up his theme throughout Chapter 14, "**Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.**" Let me close with this thought, it's true that chaos is our enemy, and order is important, but before Paul insists on decency and order, he first writes the words, "**let all things be done.**"

Paul is writing to a church who had abused the gifts, but to abuse them you have to use them... Whereas, we are probably a church who could use them a little more. We need to make room in church life for spiritual gifts - tongues, and prophecy, and all the spiritual gifts. **This should be a challenge to us in coming days.**