

DAY FOUR

Tongues & Prophecies

1 Corinthians 14

Remember what I said yesterday—the church of Corinth was a mess about spiritual gifts. And where they were messiest was about the gifts of tongues and prophecy. Not much has changed in 2,000 years. Some of the worst mistakes and even abuses of gifts occur on these gifts.

Today is part one. Today you will read 1 Corinthians 14 and learn what

Paul teaches about speaking in tongues and other “word gifts.” Tomorrow you will reflect on how we understand and experience 1 Corinthians 14 at Living Word.

REFLECT: What do you learn and what questions do you have after reading through 1 Corinthians 14?

PRAY: Holy Spirit, continue to teach me, guide me, use me. Strengthen the gifts you have already given me. Give me any other gifts YOU want me to have for the sake of building the church you love and reaching the world you love.



Today, read 1 Corinthians 13 before you do anything else. Here is an overview of the Way of Living Word on these gifts. It is an overview of what we believe and how we practice these teachings of Paul.

DAY FIVE

1 Corinthians 13–14 at Living Word

1 Corinthians 13–14

1. All these gifts are still legitimate and appropriate for today. Some churches teach these gifts have ceased. We don't believe that.

2. Be cautious, for on these gifts spiritual pride frequently occurs. A pecking order of importance is established, and the insinuation is made that you are less spiritual if you don't have the gift of tongues. This is why chapter 13 on love appears and is where it is.

3. Not everyone speaks in tongues. And, in fact, most people don't speak in tongues. It's simple, you can ask God for the gift of tongues and if God wants to give it to you, God will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Receive it, use it, and be grateful. If you don't, live in other gifts and be grateful.
4. Eagerly desire the greater gifts. Paul makes it clear in chapters 12 and 14 that other gifts are greater than tongues because the other gifts are designed to help others. That is the purpose of the gifts. Tongues is primarily for one's own spiritual experience.
5. The early church met in homes. They were small groups of people (12, 15, maybe as many as 50, but that would be a large house church). Even with such small numbers, speaking in tongues in a service was a problem and Paul cautioned great restraint. If you speak in tongues, enjoy it as your private worship.
6. Some who speak in tongues seem to be just repeating nonsense syllables that have no semblance of language. That phenomena appears in every religion in the world. It is easy to do and manipulate, but it is not the real gifts of tongues-languages.
7. In the city of Corinth, there were the old religions where the priests and prophets would fall into states of ecstasy and begin to babble words of nonsense. Apparently, the Christians in Corinth were using that as their model of tongues—unintelligible speech. That is not the gift of tongues in the Book of Acts. Paul is giving the corrective to babbling syllables. Tongues is real speech.
8. Paul is much more positive in chapter 14 on word gifts that have to do with speaking God's truth, along with having spiritual insight and discernment that is given to another person. These are gifts he wants the church to experience.
9. If you ever believe God has given you a “word” for someone else, please be extremely humble and cautious. Remember when I talked about how many thinking distortions we have (cognitive biases). Not only do we have them about ourselves, but we have them about God and others. Frankly, there is a bad track record of just wrong and misguided spiritual advice given to others in the name of a prophecy. Remember, the goal is to serve, help, and bless with words from God to others.

PRAY: Father in Heaven, give to the community of Living Word all the graces, gifts, and blessings we need to love you, to love one another, and to missionally serve the world that needs you. To you be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Signs of the Spirit

Pastor Brian Rice, June 9, 2019

EXPECT · EXPERIENCE · ENJOY



DAY ONE
Every Good Gift is From God

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. James 1:17–18

Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of

Light.... He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures. James 1:17–18, The Message

Think of all the gifts you have. Think of everything you have received. In some way, it is from God—either directly or, at times, indirectly. You can also call these gifts blessings. A blessing is when something good happens to you. These are also known as graces. Grace literally means gift. And you have many graces. These graces are given generously, freely, and out of the great love of God.

All this comes to you from God, because of Jesus, and through the Spirit. The Spirit delivers to you all that Christ has accomplished for you through his death and resurrection. When you grieve or quench the Spirit, you interrupt the delivery process and experience a diminishment of these blessings, gifts, graces.

When you are filled with the Spirit, you experience the delivery process in an uninterrupted way. You enjoy all the gifts.

REJOICE: All week long, many times, pause and be grateful for all the grace-gifts God has given you.

REMEMBER: Start today and make a list (a long list) of all the gifts, all the blessings, all the graces you have received from God. Get a piece of paper or use your journal and start making a list.

PRAY: Pray for the Spirit to fill you right now so you may participate in the fullness of God's life in you and for you. Pray for God's life to splash over into the world around you.



DAY TWO
One Church, Different Gifts
Romans 12 (especially vs. 3–8)

Romans 12:3–8 is one of the lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. The spiritual gifts list is preceded by a strong urging for Christians to be living in a way that is holy and pleasing to God. We are not conformed to the ways of the world, but we are transformed by God's inner work.

Romans 12:9–21 is another list. This list is about healthy relationships. How

do we do life together in good ways? The answer is in these verses.

Then, Romans 12:3–8 is in the middle of these themes. It is a list of gifts. We are told to be humbly self-aware about our gifts. We are told to be connected lovingly with one another. Then, we are told to use our gifts for the sake of others.

SEARCH YOUR HEART: Are you living with humility, self-awareness, love, and service? These are foundational for using the gifts God has given you.

ASSESS YOUR GIFTS:

	Strong	Weak	Not Sure
Prophecy (applying God's Word in various situations)			
Serving the needs of others			
Teaching truth, wisdom, Bible			
Encouraging (uplifting words)			
Giving (\$\$\$, time, resources)			
Leading			
Showing mercy (compassionate)			

NEXT STEPS: Today, how can you use the gifts you have for the sake of others? Ask to be filled with the Spirit, for when you are full you will use your gifts. It's what the Spirit does!

PRAY: The Spirit is always giving us new and giving us more. Don't hesitate to ask the Spirit to give you new and more graces-gifts.

DAY THREE
Different Gifts, One God, & One Purpose
1 Corinthians 12

The longest (by far) section of Scripture about spiritual gifts is found in 1 Corinthians 12–14. The church in Corinth has major problems and misunderstandings. These chapters are long correctives to the mistakes and misuses of spiritual gifts. As such, they have excellent teaching about the nature of gifts, the purpose of gifts, and the diversity of gifts.

Today is a day of studying chapter 12. Make a list of all the important principles Paul gives us. Record the most powerful lessons below.

The Most Important Lessons & Insights on Spiritual Gifts

REFLECT: Do the same Assessment and Next Steps as you did yesterday. How can you use the gifts you have received for the sake of building up our church?