

How to go to Church

DAILY BIBLE READINGS BOOK 2
EXPLORING 1 CORINTHIANS 11-14

Nick & Toni Lindeback - January 2023



lower mountains
ANGELICAN · PARISH

Week Five: 1 Corinthians 11 - Day 1

Introduction

In Chapters 8-10 Paul has used the example of food offered to idols to address the bigger issue of the whole letter - that the glory of God and cross of Christ leads us to live for eternity, not today. It leads us to love others, not ourselves, and it leads us to glorify God by telling others about him.

In Chapters 11-14 we see other 'hot topics' of gender roles and spiritual gifts addressed, but again Paul uses them to address the bigger issue of the whole letter - that the glory of God and cross of Christ leads us to live for eternity and to love others - especially as we do church together.

In these chapters Paul discusses our attitude in going to church, our behaviour when we get there, what we eat and drink at church, what we wear, how we speak, what we do in the church meeting, how we express our gifts, how we think of our brothers and sisters. Paul repeatedly says all these things should be done entirely for the good of others, instead of my good. Again the Corinthians are challenged to use their freedom to love God and love others.



1 Corinthians 11:2-16

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. 3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.



Exploring the Passage

- What is the nature of the relationship between God and Jesus? 11:3
- How is the relationship between God the Father and God the Son reflected in creation and in the church? 11:3-15



Explaining the Passage

Paul refers back to Genesis and the very nature of the Trinity as he makes his argument about men and women in the church.

Christ and God are in a relationship of perfect love, unity and order. There is no inequality or diminishing of relationship as Christ submits to God, and God the Father is the head of his beloved Son. This is the way of perfect relationship. The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is marked by love and care for the other, not powerplays, intimidation, forcefulness, and manipulation.

God has built the nature of his relationship with Christ into creation and this is to be reflected in the church. Masculinity and Femininity are both good things that reflect different parts of God's character.

In our culture it is hard to stomach any claims of authority - including Paul's claim of authority as an apostle and Paul's teachings that we shouldn't grumble against church leaders. Teachings of authority on men and women can be even harder to stomach when we recognise that these teachings have often been abused and used to hurt and harm women. We must grieve with women and families who have been hurt and hold to account men who abuse these teachings and distort the very nature of God.

We must clearly state: the Bible does not support abuse, including domestic abuse in any and all of its forms - emotional abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, or spiritual abuse.

In the culture of Corinth, for men to cover their head, or for women to not wear a head scarf/hairstyle communicated a rejection of the Bible's teaching on differing roles. A rejection of the goodness of male and female. This was also shocking to the non-Christians in Corinth. The hair/head covering is a cultural symbol that may not translate into our culture, but Paul's argument is from the nature of the Trinity - God's good way built into creation may not be varied locally or culturally.

Paul shows that in God's good design men and women are:

- Equal - men and women relate to each other like Christ and God, who are equal.
- Mutually Dependent - Adam needs help because he is not capable independently to do the work of God. No loss of dignity in helping – God is described as the helper of human beings.
- Different in Role - Men and women are different in role, not in ability, value, status, or essence. In God's sight our value does not come from what we do, our status etc – unlike in Corinth and our culture.

Paul encourages men and women to pray and prophesy in church meetings. Paul makes it clear that prayer and prophesy is to be done in a way that honours the God-given order of authority, submission and interdependence between husbands and wives. In the Bible, headship is most commonly worked out in the family household. The principle of male headship in the household is extended to churches because churches are assemblies of the households – so headship in households needs to be recognised in the church.

Did you know God built wisdom and order into the very fabric of the world?

**"The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be."
Proverbs 8:22-23**



Going Deeper

- What parts of this passage made you uncomfortable? Dwell deeply and be honest with yourself - where does this discomfort come from? Where have you decided to follow the culture and not the wisdom of God?

Paul has been encouraging the Corinthians to give up their rights and use their freedom to serve God and put others first. Christianity gave rights and dignity to women in a society where they were seen as second class and less-than. Jesus brought freedom where there was oppression. But now in our culture we are told that as men and women we can be independent of each other - that we don't need each other. That we are interchangeable as there is no difference between men and women. That accepting any form of authority leads to a loss of status and worth.

- Where in your life are you insisting on the so called 'freedoms' of the world and rejecting the wisdom that God built into creation?
- Where in your life are you unwilling to lay down your so-called rights to love God and others?
- Where in your life have you been distorting the Bible to claim 'rights' that you use to wrong others and 'freedoms' that you use to imprison those you are meant to love?



Prayer

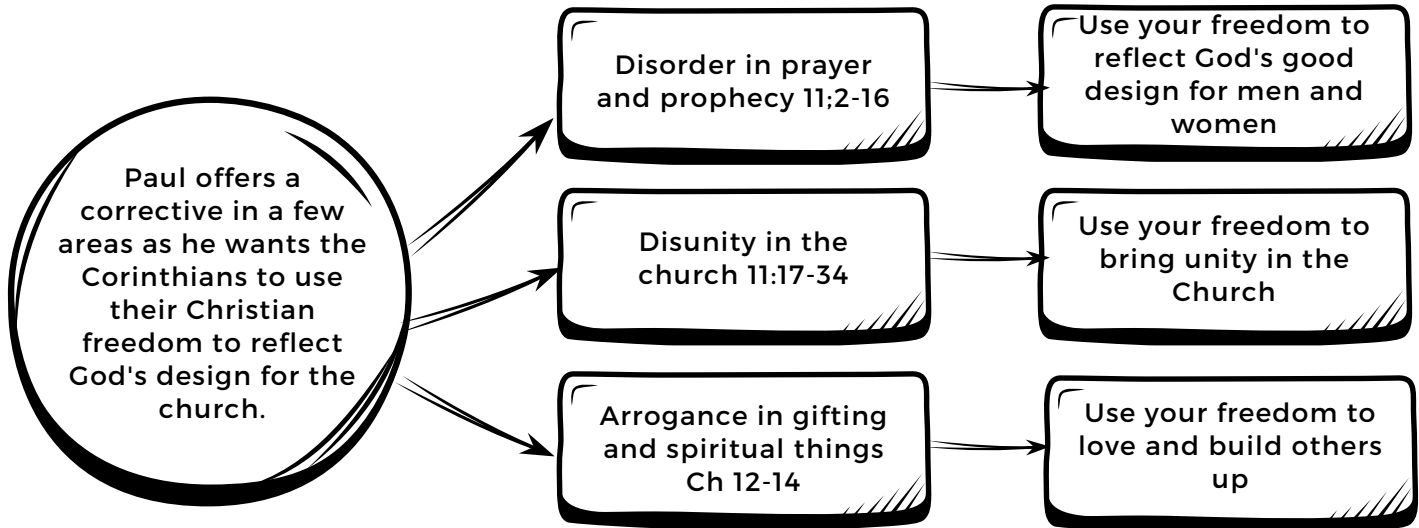
Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are the very essence and definition of love - in you there is no darkness at all. You created humanity - male and female - and said that is was very good.

Confession: Forgive me for when I distort your goodness and hurt others. For when I insist on my so-called rights and freedoms and disregard the freedom that comes from your loving plan for the world.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that you made men and women to reflect the goodness and beauty of the relationship that exists within yourself. Thankyou for sending Christ into the world, to model true servant leadership, sacrificial authority, and loving submission to your plans and purposes.

Supplication: Help me to trust in your words and not in the words of my culture. To trust in your goodness and to find the true freedom that only you can bring.

In the name of the suffering servant and glorious King Jesus, Amen.



Week Five: 1 Corinthians 11 - Day 2

Recap

Church meetings that reflect the relationship between God the Father and God the Son are marked by order and unity. This will be seen by the way in which husbands and wives pray and prophesy at church meetings. It will also be seen in how churches celebrate the Lord's Supper.



1 Corinthians 11:17-37

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

Paul doesn't really think some of them have God's approval and some don't. He is using their phrase to show their foolishness.



Exploring the Passage

- Why doesn't Paul commend the Corinthian's church meetings?



Explaining the Passage

The Corinthian's church meetings are so bad that Paul says it would be better if they stayed at home, 11:17, 22. Their meetings were marked by divisions, belittling and ungodly behaviour. They brought worldly divisions concerning social status into the church.

The Lord's Supper is a meal hosted by Jesus that highlights we are one body – a family without divisions. The Lord's supper is for 'you' – God's people gathered. The Lord's Supper remembers Christ's death for the church which makes relationship with God possible, 11:24-25. And the Lord's supper proclaims Jesus' death until his return – it looks forward to the heavenly banquet in the new creation which will be enjoyed by God's united people, 11:26. When you remember Christ's death, and where he is taking us, there is no room for a competitive pecking order among Christ's people.



Going Deeper

- How do your actions at our church gatherings tell the world we are one united family in Christ?
- If you don't intentionally talk to one person you don't really know each Sunday - why not?

In the Ancient world people struggled to eat far more than they do in modern Australia, but our culture is far lonelier. We must expand our definition of rich and poor to include rich and poor in relationship. You may not be ignoring or harming financially poorer people at church, but are you doing it to relationally poorer people? If you only talk with the same people every Sunday, chances are the answer is YES.



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, the earth is yours, and the fullness thereof.

Confession: Sorry for when I have caused division through words I have spoken and words of welcome and friendship that have gone unsaid. Forgive me for when I have been content with factions and placed myself and my friends at the centre of the church.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou for the unity of believers that you won for us in the death and resurrection of your son. For the gift of the Lord's Supper as a reminder of our spiritual unity.

Supplication: Give me a heart for the outsider and the outcast, take me from my comfort zone into the fingertips of your mission as I share your love with those I often neglect. Help me to take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner - loving you and those of your people I find hard to love.

In the compassionate name of Jesus, Amen.

Week Five: 1 Corinthians 11 - Day 3

Recap

The way in which church members relate to each other and celebrate the Lord's supper is to reflect the unity we have in Christ. This is because Christ died for us and is taking us to be his people in the new creation.



1 Corinthians 11:27-34

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. 34 Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.



Exploring the Passage

- The Corinthians are participating in the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner. What change is required? 11:28-29 and 11:33-34



Explaining the Passage

Eating the Lord's supper in a worthy manner requires:

- Self-examination to see whether we are discerning the 'body', that is the church – our unity together as God's people in Jesus.
- Coming to church ready to serve and wait for one another.

We eat the Lord's Supper because Jesus died and rose again to make us one body – his church, 11:28-29 (also see 10:16-17). The Lord's Supper is an opportunity to examine ourselves to see whether we are continuing in faith and unity.

Paul is clear that sometimes troubles are God's discipline to keep us in the faith so that we avoid the final judgement. The Lord's supper is a place for the repentant heart – it gives us the opportunity to examine our troubles to see whether we are remaining in Jesus and his church, 11:30-32.

Our church meetings are not to be marked by worldly social divisions. Rather we are to discern that we are the body of the Lord and relate to each other in godliness, 11:32-33.



Going Deeper

- What sins do you need to confess before you take the Lord's Supper?
- Who in church do you need to be reconciled with as you 'discern the body'?



Prayer

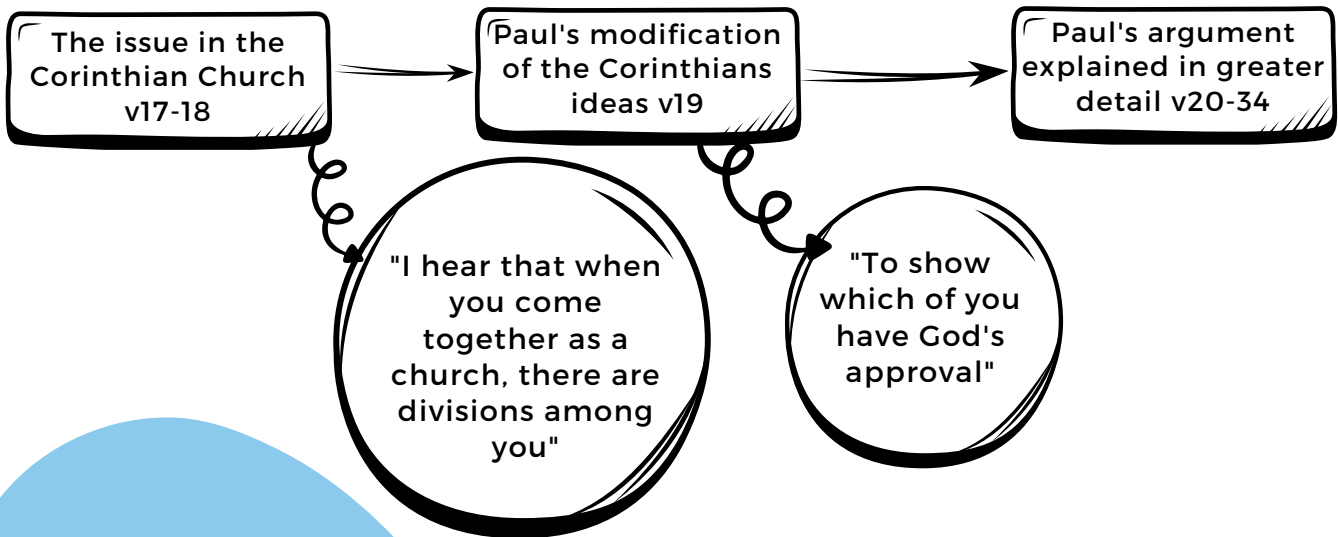
Adoration: Eternal God, as a loving Father you discipline me. As a loving Father you have spared me from your wrath.

Confession: Forgive me for when I have let unrepentant sin grow in my life. For when I have hurt my brothers and sisters for whom you died.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that because of Jesus' death and resurrection I am not condemned with the world.

Supplication: Help me to live for your glory in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, that many may be saved. That I may follow the example of Paul as he follows the example of Christ.

In the name of Jesus, your obedient son, Amen.



Week Five: 1 Corinthians 11 - Day 4

Review

Today we will read all of chapter 11:2-34 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 11:2-34

I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. 3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

7 A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,

15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32 Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. 34 Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

Our church gatherings are to reflect our relationship with Christ.

The way in which husbands and wives pray and prophesy at church meetings is to reflect the relationship between God and Jesus that has been written into creation.

Explaining the Passage (continued)

The way in which church members relate to each other and celebrate the Lord's supper is to reflect our unity in Christ that we share because Christ died for us and is taking us to enjoy the heavenly banquet in the new creation.

There is no place in our gathering for worldly social distinctions and ungodly behaviour. We are to examine ourselves to see if we come to church to honour the body and serve others. We are to build the body and not create disorder and division.



Going Deeper

- Examine yourself - why do you go to church?
- Is it for a Jesus-and-me experience? To look better than other people? Or for the sake of the body of God's people to remember and proclaim Jesus' death until he comes again?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are the very essence and definition of love.

Confession: Sorry for when I have caused division through words I have spoken and words of welcome and friendship that have gone unsaid.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that because of Jesus' death and resurrection I am not condemned with the world.

Supplication: Help me to live for your glory in everything I do. That I may follow the example of Paul as he follows the example of Christ.

Through the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, Amen.

Week Six: 1 Corinthians 12 - Day 1

Introduction

The Corinthian church was marked by arrogance and division because they misunderstood what is truly spiritual. The Corinthians thought they were more spiritual than other believers if they followed certain leaders (chapters 1-4), had certain attitudes about relationships (chapters 5-7), and exercised their freedoms in Christ even at the expense of the salvation of others (chapters 8-10). In Chapters 11-14, Paul addresses the divisions displayed in their church meetings.



1 Corinthians 12:1-3

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.

3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.

The issue raised by the Corinthians
"Now about..."

Paul's modification of the Corinthians ideas

Paul's argument explained in greater detail

'spiritual gifts' - the term is 'the spirituals' (could be things / people) as the idea of 'gift' is not in the Greek word that is translated 'spiritual gifts'.

Paul plays on the idea of 'one' and 'many' of 'mute' and 'speech'

'Spiritual things' is a word throughout the letter and the Corinthians like to apply it to themselves. Paul modifies their idea with another word for spiritual. The translators translate both the Corinthian's word and Paul's word as 'spiritual' but the two words have different meanings. Paul's word means 'the grace things' or 'the gifts of grace'.





Exploring the Passage

- Highlight words to do with speech.
- How does Paul describe idols? 12:2
- What is the difference in speech between those who are in God's kingdom and those who aren't? 12:3



Explaining the Passage

In chapters 12-14, Paul seeks to rectify the Corinthian's uninformed belief that having certain spiritual gifts makes you more spiritual than other believers.

Paul says that what makes the Corinthians spiritual is that they have left idols and turned to God – they have received the Spirit of God which enables them to say and believe that 'Jesus is Lord'. Idols are mute – they do not speak and their worshippers do not speak rightly of Jesus. Unlike idols, God speaks. When you have God's Spirit, you speak God's truth and say 'Jesus is Lord'.

The big dividing line in humanity is whether or not you believe Jesus is Lord. There are not levels of spirituality within the church. The marker of spirituality is not what spiritual gifts you have – it is whom you trust for reconciliation with God.



Going Deeper

- Where do you draw dividing lines in the church and assume you are more 'spiritual' than others? Or that others are more 'spiritual' than you?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you have given me your Spirit so that I can say "Jesus is Lord".

Confession: Forgive me for when I have been uninformed and led astray.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that I am now led by the Spirit of God and speak His words.

Supplication: Help me to use my gifts and words to love others.

Through the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, Amen.

Week Six: 1 Corinthians 12 - Day 2

Recap

Those who are truly spiritual believe Jesus is Lord because they have God's Spirit. Possessing particular spiritual gifts does not make you more spiritual than any other believer.



1 Corinthians 12:4-13

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

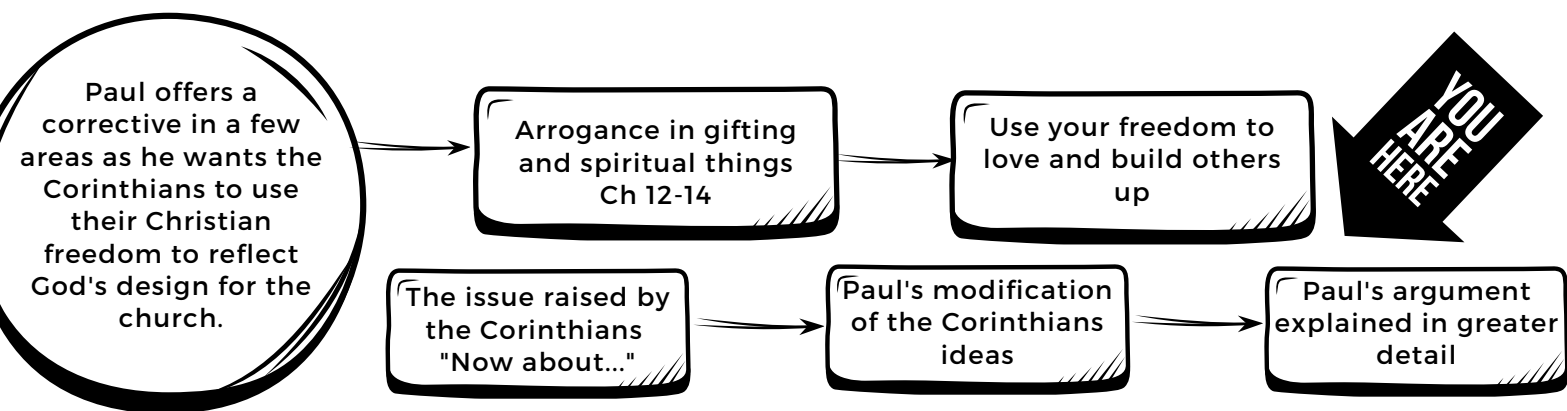
10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.



Exploring the Passage

- What do all the gifts have in common?
- Why does God give good gifts to his people?





Explaining the Passage

The Corinthians considered that certain gifts, especially speaking in tongues, made them more spiritual than other believers. In fixing their uninformed thinking, Paul takes their eyes off the gifts and onto the gift giver - God!

God who is one – Father, Son and Spirit – gives believers many different gifts for the unity and good of his church. The gifts point to the goodness of God.

Every believer has the Spirit and belongs to Christ's body – the church. A human body has many parts that work together for the good of the body. Similarly, the members of Christ's body have different gifts for the unity and the good of the church. God doesn't give believers gifts for their sake, to make them more spiritual than other believers. God gives these gifts for the good of other believers – for the good of the church.



Going Deeper

- How are you using your God-given gifts for the good of Christ's body?



Prayer

Adoration: Almighty God, you are a loving Father who gives good gifts to his children.

Confession: Forgive me for when I have used your gifts for myself and not your church.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou for giving gifts and bringing unity through your Spirit.

Supplication: Help me use my gifts for the common good.

In the generous name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Six: 1 Corinthians 12 - Day 3

Recap

God gives believers different gifts for the good of the church. Certain spiritual gifts do not make you more spiritual than other believers.



1 Corinthians 12:14-31

Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.



Exploring the Passage

- What does Paul say to those who felt 'less spiritual' because they lacked certain spiritual gifts that were prized by the Corinthians? 12:14-20
- What does Paul say to those who felt 'more spiritual' because they possessed certain spiritual gifts that were prized by the Corinthians? 12:21-26
- What is surprising in what Paul says in 12:31?



Explaining the Passage

God has arranged the church to be made up of members with different gifts. The different giftings are not a basis for division but for unity. Every member has a contribution to make and each contribution is necessary no matter how seemingly weak and unimportant. The body is diminished if one member thinks they don't belong. The body is diminished if one member thinks another member doesn't belong. God has made us interdependent. Our difference in gifts should strengthen our unity and humble us to care for one another.

While our gifts don't make us more spiritual than any other believer, certain gifts are more helpful for building the body of Christ than others, 12:31. Paul explains why in Chapters 13 and 14.



Going Deeper

- When are you tempted to judge people's value and worth through a cultural lens?
- What gifts do you value above others - what changes do you need to make to your mindset?
- How does this passage challenge you when you are tempted to think you don't belong at church?



Prayer

Adoration: Lord God, you have placed the parts of the body just as you wanted them. You give greater honour to the parts that lack it.

Confession: Forgive me when I dishonour that which you have given honour.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that in Christ I am united to my brothers and sisters. That you raise the lowly.

Supplication: Help me to love you and your people - pursuing the most excellent way of love.

In the name of Jesus, the head of the Church, Amen.



Week Six: 1 Corinthians 12 - Day 4

Review

Today we will read all of chapter 12 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 12

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. **3** Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. **5** There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. **6** There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8** To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10** to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14** Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. **19** If they were all one part, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" **22** On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23** and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.



Explaining the Passage

The true sign of being spiritual is whether you say and believe 'Jesus is Lord'.

Possessing certain God-given spiritual gifts does not make you more spiritual than other believers in the church. In his goodness God has given gifts for the good of the church. God has purposely gifted believers differently so that we grow in unity as Christ's body and so we grow in love.



Going Deeper

- Is there someone in the church who is overlooked because their gifts are not as glamorous as others? How could you encourage them to serve in the church?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you have given me your Spirit so that I can say "Jesus is Lord".

Confession: Forgive me for when I have used your gifts for myself and not your church.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that I am now led by the Spirit of God and speak His words.

Supplication: Help me to love you and your people.

In the name of our risen Lord Jesus, Amen.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?

Week Seven: 1 Corinthians 13 - Day 1

Recap

Paul is correcting the Corinthian's uninformed thinking that particular gifts, especially speaking in tongues, makes you more spiritual than other believers. True spirituality is believing and saying, 'Jesus is Lord'. God purposely gifts believers differently so that we grow in unity and love as Christ's body. In Chapter 13 we learn the 'excellent way' to use gifts.



1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.



Exploring the Passage

- Highlight the gifts/actions in the passage. Highlight 'not have love'.
- What gifts/actions does Paul mention?
- What makes these gifts worthless?



Explaining the Passage

The Corinthians prized the gifts of speaking in tongues, prophetic knowledge, and miracle-producing faith. Paul says that even if you could produce the most amazing feats with these gifts, without love they make you an unbearable noise, and a nothing, 13:1-2. Even if you are the most sacrificial person as Paul was, without love you gain nothing, 13:3.

This goes against natural human thinking. We think doing the spectacular, e.g. miracles, means someone is super-spiritual, more like Jesus. We think making an incredible sacrifice means you are more spiritual. But even those opposed to God can do the miraculous and sacrificial – see Matthew 7:21-23.

What makes you spiritual is saying and believing, 'Jesus is Lord'. Knowing Jesus is your Lord causes you to use your God-given gifts to love others. You will not use your gifts to puff yourself up and put others down.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Matthew 7:21-23



Going Deeper

- Where and how will you use gifts God has graced you with in love to build others up in Christ?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are love, and in you there is no darkness at all.

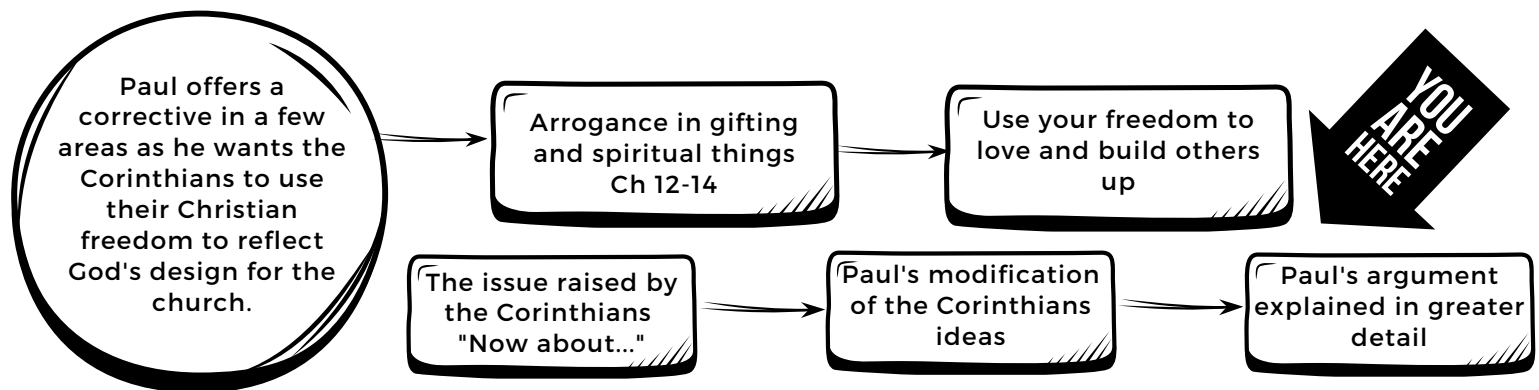
Confession: Sorry for the many times in which I have acted without love. Using my gifts for my own glory.

Thanksgiving: Thank you for sending your son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, so that all people can know what love is, and so that we can live in your love forever.

Supplication: Help me to use my gifts to love others and to value what you value.

In the loving name of Jesus, Amen.

This passage continues the logical flow of the start of Chapter 12 and the whole book.



Week Seven: 1 Corinthians 13 - Day 2

Recap

To be spiritual is to believe Jesus is Lord and this overflows into using our God-given gifts in love. Without love even the most spectacular gifts and sacrifice make you a nothing.



1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.



Exploring the Passage

The Corinthian Church was marked by:

- Division over leaders (chapters 1-4)
- Sexual immorality and taking believers to court (chapters 5-7)
- Exercising their freedoms in Christ at the expense of the salvation of others (chapters 8-10).

How does Paul rebuke these behaviours in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?



Explaining the Passage

Paul rebukes the Corinthians for not loving each other. Their divisions displayed their boasting and arrogance; their immorality displayed their rejoicing in wrong-doing; their exercising freedoms displayed their insistence in getting their own way. The Corinthians were not displaying Christ's love.

Only Jesus perfectly fulfills the definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13. When we know Christ's love, our desire will be to grow in loving Christ's people as Christ has loved us.



Going Deeper

- Reflect on your love for the body of Christ by reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 slowly and inserting your name where for the words: 'love' and 'it'.
- Where and how will you seek reconciliation with those you have failed to love?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are patient and kind. You do not rejoice in evil, but delight in truth.

Confession: Sorry for the many times I have failed to love others. *Take a moment to confess specific times when you have failed to love others.*

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you keep no record of my wrongs and that you help me to love others.

Supplication: Help me to reflect you as I love others.

In the patient name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Seven: 1 Corinthians 13 - Day 3

Recap

Those who are truly spiritual believe Jesus is Lord and this overflows into using our God-given gifts in self-sacrificial love to build others in Christ.



1 Corinthians 13:8-13

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Exploring the Passage

This passage is full of contrasts.

- What never fails and what passes away? 13:8
- What is 'in part' and what is complete? 13:9-10
- What else does Paul contrast in 13:11 and 12?



Explaining the Passage

Gifts are good but gifts are limited. They are God's provision for the church until Jesus' returns – for when completeness comes (13:9), and we see him face to face (13:12). As Charlie Skrine says, gifts are like the bibs and safety seats that protect and help children while they are eagerly waiting to grow up. When Christ comes, we will be mature and no longer have any need of gifts. When Jesus returns, we will know him fully as he knows us now. We will no longer have the 'dim reflection' of him in the Bible.

Gifts are for this world but love lasts eternally. When Jesus returns faith will become sight. Hope will be fulfilled. But love will always remain – love is our devotion to God throughout eternity and his commitment to his people. So let's use our gifts in love – this is the 'excellent way' (12:31).



Going Deeper

- How do your thoughts and actions show that you are living for eternity or for today?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, I long to see your glory, to see your splendour face to face.

Confession: Sorry for when I have lived for today instead of eternity. For when I have valued the things of this world and not the things you value.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that faith, hope, and love remain.

Supplication: Help me to live with faith, hope, and love now and forever.

In the eternal name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Seven: 1 Corinthians 13 - Day 4

Review

Today we will read all of chapter 13 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul's key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

Even if we achieve spectacular things with the gifts God gives us, we are nothing if we don't use them in God's way of love. In God's way of love, we will use our gifts for the good of others. We will not use our gifts to puff ourselves up and put others down.

God gives gifts to the church until Christ returns. We won't need gifts in heaven. But love lasts forever. So we are to use our gifts in the excellent way of love.



Going Deeper

- What kind of people do you look up to - People with gifts or people who love?
- Where does your life reflect 'Corinthian values'?
- Where does your life reflect 'the most excellent way'?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are patient and kind. You do not rejoice in evil, but delight in truth.

Confession: Sorry for when I have lived for today instead of eternity. For when I have valued the things of this world and not the things you value.

Thanksgiving: Thank you that you keep no record of my wrongs and that you help me to love others.

Supplication: Help me to live with faith, hope, and love now and forever.

In the loving name of Jesus, Amen.



Week Eight: 1 Corinthians 14 - Day 1

Recap

Paul is correcting the Corinthians incorrect thinking that certain gifts make some believers more spiritual than others. Instead, all believers are equally spiritual because it is only by the Spirit that we can confess that 'Jesus is Lord'. God builds his church by giving believers different gifts that are to be used in love, not arrogance, for the common good.



1 Corinthians 14:1-12

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. 3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. 4 Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you,

unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

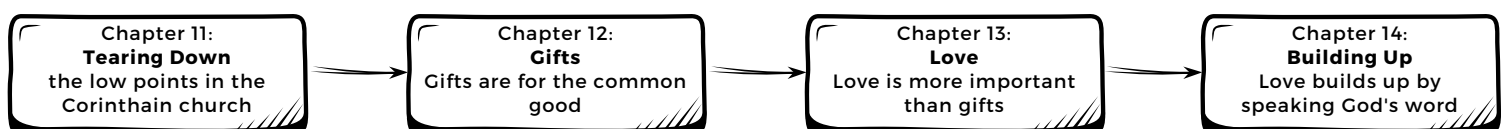
7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? 8 Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? 9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. 12 So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.



Exploring the Passage

- Highlight words about building up the church: building/strengthening/edifying etc
- Why is prophesying a greater gift than speaking in tongues?

Chapter 14 brings together a lot of the key ideas of Chapters 11-13.





Explaining the Passage

When we pursue love, we will desire the gifts that build people in Christ, 14:1-6. Prophecy builds others because it is speaking of Jesus. Prophecy is not to be confused with OT prophets and NT apostles who speak God's word which must be obeyed. Prophecy is also not to be confused with NT preaching by the church leaders. Prophecy is believers speaking God's truths to our particular situations so that we are built up, encouraged and strengthened. We shall see that prophecy requires testing and weighing what is said.

Gifts like speaking in tongues are less desirable because they are unintelligible and so do not build up the church, 14:2, 6-11. The Corinthians thought speaking in tongues made them spiritual - they did not understand that when we meet together our aim is to speak intelligible words that bring God's truths to bear on each other's lives, 14:12.

'For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Revelation 19:10



Going Deeper

- How do your actions show that you value speaking to build others up or speaking to build yourself up?
- What 'hobby-horses' are you aware of that make you quick to speak and slow to listen?
- What actions and thoughts would have to change for you to go to church to build others up?



Prayer

Adoration: Lord God, you have given us your Spirit that we may serve you build up your church.

Confession: Forgive me when I seek to build up myself and not your people.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that you have given me brothers and sisters in Christ to strengthen and encourage me and your church.

Supplication: Help me to desire the gifts that build up your church to serve others in love.

In the name of Jesus, the head of the Church, Amen.

Week Eight: 1 Corinthians 14 - Day 2

Recap

All believers are blessed with God-given gifts that they are to use in love so that Christ's church is built up. Pursuing love means that we will desire gifts like prophecy that build the church, rather than gifts like speaking in tongues that only build the person with the gift.



1 Corinthians 14:13-25

For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. 16 Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? 17 You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. 21 In the Law it is written: "With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord."

22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, 25 as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"



Exploring the Passage

- Highlight references to 'unbelievers' and 'inquirers'.
- What does Paul want for the unbeliever in a church meeting?



Explaining the Passage

Because speaking in tongues is unintelligible it is not well suited to the church meeting because those present, including unbelievers, cannot pray, sing and give thanks to God with the tongue-speaker, 14:13-17. Paul gives a mind-blowing ratio – it would be better to say five words like ‘Jesus is Lord and King’ for the whole meeting than to speak 10,000 words in a tongue, 14:19.

14:21 quotes Isaiah 28:11-12 – Israel was surrounded by the Assyrian language that they did not understand when they were conquered. It was the sign of God’s judgement on Israel for their unbelief. Now is the time for inquirers to come to know Jesus. If unbelievers come to church and hear believers speaking in tongues, they will think we are out of our minds, 14:23. But if unbelievers hear believers speaking the truths of God’s gospel in an intelligible way then they may come to repentance, 14:24.



Going Deeper

- How do your actions at church gatherings help unbelievers to come to understand the gospel? Do they see a welcoming community - God’s love in action?
- When was the last time you spoke to a newcomer at church? Praise God - we have newcomers pass through our church every week. Are you prepared to speak to them every week?

Paul says to eagerly desire the gift of prophecy - not the gift of small talk.

- What actions and thoughts would have to change for you to have gospel conversations about the sermon with newcomers and regulars at church?



Prayer

Adoration: Lord God, you have given us your Spirit that others can understand the gospel.

Confession: Forgive me when I seek to build up myself and not to make you known.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that you have given me gifts to show and testify to your glory.

Supplication: Help me to desire the gifts that build up your church and help others know who you are.

In the name of Jesus, the head of the Church, Amen.

Week Eight: 1 Corinthians 14 - Day 3

Recap

We pursue love by speaking God's truths in an intelligible manner so as to build believers in Christ and bring unbelievers to repentance.



1 Corinthians 14:26-40

26 What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

34 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38 But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

39 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.



Exploring the Passage

- Highlight words to do with 'order', 'peace'.
- Highlight 'silent' and 'quiet'.
- What do we learn about the character of God?



Explaining the Passage

The Corinthians came to their public church meetings eager to speak but they were not speaking in a way that built up believers and non-believers, 14:26. Paul gives guidelines for ordered and peaceful meetings that reflect God's character. The Corinthians were to move from:

- Many to fewer speakers – 14:26-29
- Unintelligible tongues to intelligible prophecy – 14:27-28
- Disorder to order – one at a time, no disrupting – 14:30-33

Prophecy is to be weighed, unlike Paul's words that are God's commands to be obeyed – 14:29 and 36-38.

Verses 34-35 can seem quite jarring, but 'silent in the church' can't mean silence without qualification because we know from chapter 11 that women can pray and prophesy – both speaking activities – in the church. In chapter 14 people are being asked to be silent in other ways. 'If they want to inquire about something' may cover hostile questioning in the meeting where individuals are disagreeing with what others are saying and perhaps in particular with what their husbands have just said. It fits alongside all the other instructions in Ch 14 that are designed to make their meetings more orderly and harmonious. Not having marital arguments, speaking over, or undercutting each other in public is good advice for life - let alone church gatherings.

Our public meetings are an important part of the building of the body in which only a few of us will speak as we listen and respond to God's word together. There are many other opportunities for us to build the body as we speak God's truths to one another in love, e.g. after the meeting, growth groups.



Going Deeper

- How is the church to reflect God's character?

The Corinthians wanted to speak because they wanted to be proved right and shown to be wise -

- When do you feel the need to be proved right? Or to show your rightness?
- Can you fall into the trap of valuing being right over the relationship itself?
- How do you need to reconsider the way you interact with others at church and in life in response to the character of God and the example of Jesus?



Prayer

Adoration: Father in Heaven, you are a God of peace.

Confession: Forgive me for when I need to be proven right and seen to be wise.

Thanksgiving: Thankyou that you have chosen to work through people.

Supplication: Help me to build up your people at church and during the week. In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, Amen.

Week Eight: 1 Corinthians 14 - Day 4

Recap

Today we will read all of chapter 14 and summarise the key point.



1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. 2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. 3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. 4 Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? 8 Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? 9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.

10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. 12 So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. 16 Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? 17 You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

22 Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, 25 as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

26 What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28 If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.

34 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37 If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. 38 But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

39 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.



Exploring the Passage

- What is Paul’s key point in one sentence?



Explaining the Passage

Churches that do not grow Christ’s people in the gospel are not loving churches. A Christ-honouring and loving church is the church where members use their gifts, especially their words, to grow Christ’s people in the gospel of Jesus. In these churches, members will speak ‘to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort’.

In these churches most members will be quiet in the public meetings so that the intelligible speaking of God’s word can be heard in an orderly and peaceful manner that reflects God’s character. Such meetings grow believers and bring non-believers to repentance.

Outside of the formal part of the public meetings members will look for many ways to use their God-given gifts to build each other in the faith.



Going Deeper

- Are you going to church and growth group for the sake of others? Or only speaking to build yourself up?
- What speech would it be helpful for both men and women to engage in during our gatherings?
- What speech would it be helpful for both men and women to engage in after our gatherings?



Prayer

Loving Father, you have given me your Spirit and your Church. Sorry for when I have sought to build myself up. Thankyou that forgiveness is found in you. Help me to love you and your people. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Recommend Resources:

The following resources have enabled the completion of this booklet and are helpful for further exploring 1 Corinthians -

Andy Gemmill

Talks from St Helen's Partnership Summer School 2009 -

<https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/series/4317/>

And CrossPreach -

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