

December 3, 2023

Worthy Worship 1 Corinthians 14 Pastor Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



First Corinthians 14 is a chapter that addresses multiple controversial topics. It talks about the proper use of tongues and prophecy. Paul's desire is for the church to be edified and the worship service to be orderly. Paul also deals with an issue concerning women that we must wrestle with. In dealing with this passage (and all passages) we must remember that our current culture gives little to no value in our ability to understand the author's intent. However, the historical culture of the church in Corinth is vital to our understanding of Paul's instruction. Join us this week as we seek to understand Paul's instruction to the church about worship that is worthy to God.

THE ONE WHO SPEAKS IN
A TONGUE EDIFIES
HIMSELF, BUT THE ONE
WHO PROPHESES EDIFIES
THE CHURCH.
- 1 CORINTHIANS 14:4

Prophecy a Superior Gift

14 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. ⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

⁶ But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? ⁷ Yet *even* lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? ⁸ For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? ⁹ So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning. ¹¹ If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. ¹² So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

¹³ Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. ¹⁸ I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Instruction for the Church

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord. ²² So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. ²³ Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

²⁶ What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone

speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret; ²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. ³⁰ But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; ³³ for God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

³⁴ The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶ Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only?

³⁷ If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. ³⁸ But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized.

³⁹ Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. ⁴⁰ But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

🕒 **EXAMINE His Word (Observation)** (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details from this passage.

Make 10 of your own observations from this passage. Avoid jumping to make interpretive decisions or drawing applications. Save those for the sections that follow. At this point just observe this passage and what it says. Look for things that are emphasized, repeated, and what stands out to you. Look at the verbs, what actions are in the text? Who is involved in the text? There is no right or wrong answer, just list 10 things you see in the text.

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2 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

1. The spiritual gift of prophecy is listed separately from the gift of teaching and apostleship in chapter 12. How do we define this gift of prophecy?
2. Why does Paul say prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues?
3. What is the benefit of speaking in tongues?
4. Where does Paul seem to practice speaking in tongues? Is it in the church? (17-19)
5. What is the purpose of tongues? (22-23)

6. Looking at verses 26-33 what is Paul's main concern for the church? What does he want them to do?

7. In Chapter 12 Paul tells the women how they should properly pray and prophesy in church. Why would he tell them to be silent in chapter 14 when he already seemed to permit them to pray and prophesy in chapter 12?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)
Why does this MATTER to me?

8. What is Paul's main point in this passage?

9. How does the historical culture in Corinth differ from our current culture in ways that would impact our understanding of Paul's intent?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

Sermon Notes