

## **I CORINTHIANS: HANDLING BELIEVERS' PRACTICAL PROBLEMS**

### **XVI. God's Guidance On Spiritual Gifts, 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40**

#### **F. Heeding God's Regulations In Using Spiritual Gifts**

**(1 Corinthians 14:26-40)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The people Paul disciplined in Corinth lived in a city that was known for its immorality, alcoholism and worldly pursuits (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians: The City of Corinth," p. 1619), so the formidable influence of the city's culture on the Corinthian believers left Paul addressing "(a)berrant beliefs and practices of an astonishing variety" in his letters to them, *Ibid*.
- B. However, in a vision Paul received from God as he ministered at Corinth in Acts 18:10b NIV, God told him, "I have many people in this city," so Paul was to keep on ministering regardless of the trials he faced there.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, Paul provided edifying regulations on the use of spiritual gifts in the local church. We thus view this passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### **II. Heeding God's Regulations In Using Spiritual Gifts, 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.**

- A. Paul noted that the Corinthian believers were disorderly in their use of the speaking gifts, with each one having a psalm, a lesson, a prophetic revelation, a tongue or an interpretation of a tongue, 1 Corinthians 14:26.
- B. Such disorder created a jumbled mass of noise, with no one being able to concentrate on what was being expressed by the speaking gifts so that no one but the speakers could possibly be edified.
- C. Paul thus gave guidelines for order in using the speaking gifts so the church could be edified, 1 Cor. 14:27-33:
  - 1. For believers who spoke in tongues, there should be only two or at the most three, speaking in turn, with someone interpreting each tongue when it ministers, 1 Corinthians 14:27.
  - 2. If there was no interpreter for a believer with a tongues gift, he was to remain silent in the church and speak silently to himself and to the Lord, 1 Corinthians 14:28.
  - 3. Those with the gift of prophecy were to speak with two or three prophets speaking in a meeting, and others were to "weigh carefully" (*diakriseis*) what they said to "ascertain if the message delivered was indeed from God (cf. 1 John 4:1)" as it would have to "be in agreement with the body of truth already revealed," that is, it had to agree with Scripture. (1 Cor. 14:29; *Ibid.*, ftn. to Rom. 12:6; B. K. C., N. T., p. 540)
  - 4. If God gives a revelation to a prophet who is sitting by listening to another prophet, the first prophet is to sit down and let the next prophet speak, 1 Cor. 14:30. That way, all the prophets who get revelations from the Lord can prophesy in turn for everyone in the church to be edified, 1 Corinthians 14:31 NIV.
  - 5. Paul also stated that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets, and since God is a God of peace and not of disorder, the prophets could choose to speak or remain silent. This statement counters claims that some Charismatics make that they cannot control their tongues speaking or other activities that they experience in church meetings. Such uncontrollable actions are not of the Lord! (1 Corinthians 14:32-33)
- D. Paul then gave directives for women in the local church in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35:
  - 1. Christian women, including those with speaking gifts, were to be silent in church meetings, for they were not permitted to speak there, but to be in submission, silently attending the church services, 1 Cor. 14:34.
  - 2. Paul added that if there was anything a woman desired to learn, she was to ask her husband at home, for it was shameful for a woman to speak in a local church meeting, 1 Corinthians 14:35.
  - 3. To apply this to us today, Paul's similar directive for women in the church in 1 Timothy 2:12-15 called for women (a) not to exercise authority over men (b) or to teach men, for a woman's role (c) since the time of creation was subjection to the man, (d) the woman was more vulnerable to being deceived, and (d) her role was to be a homemaker. In Paul's strong patristic culture, it was considered insubordinate for a woman even to ask a question in public, so Paul condemned it in 1 Corinthians 14:35. (Today, we let women ask questions in our Adult Sunday School Class because such activity is not often viewed in our culture as being insubordinate, and it still conforms to the role of women as taught in 1 Timothy 2:12-15.)
- E. Paul added that what he wrote on these subjects was God's will, that his readers should heed him and desire to prophecy and not forbid the gift of tongues, but to do all things in a fitting and orderly way, 1 Cor. 14:36-40.

**Lesson:** *Paul presented God's commands on the use of the speaking gifts for edifying the whole local church.*

**Application:** *(1) May we follow Paul's directives that those with speaking gifts might truly edify the whole body. (2) May we seek to function in a fitting and an orderly manner in all that we do that God might be glorified.*