

# **1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE**

## **Part XXXII: The Need In Ministry To Clarify Facts To The Mind To Edify**

### **(1 Corinthians 14:3-19)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Many evangelicals believe that the degree that those who listen to a ministry experience a "good feeling" about that ministry effort determines that ministry's spiritual credibility and effectiveness.
- B. However, in dealing with the misuse of the gift of tongues speaking, Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:3-19 corrected this concept, providing an important application for us (as follows):

#### **II. The Need In Ministry To Clarify Facts To The Mind To Edify, 1 Corinthians 14:3-19.**

- A. We learned in our last lesson that the gift of speaking in tongues consisted of God's enabling a believer to speak His truth in a Gentile language that the speaker would not otherwise naturally know, cf. Acts 2:1-11.
- B. However, the Corinthian believers misused that gift in pagan-like form: the pagans used ecstatic, unintelligible speech in worship, so the Corinthians were using the true gift of tongues without interpreters and sounded as unintelligible as pagan speakers. (Joseph Dillow, Speaking in Tongues: Seven Crucial Questions, p. 13)
- C. Paul corrected this error, revealing that true spiritual edification occurs only through the clarification of spiritual facts to the mind of the listener, 1 Corinthians 14:3-19 (as follows):
  - 1. The Apostle contrasted the edifying use of the gift of prophecy with the way the Corinthians were misusing the gift of tongues and thus not achieving God's desired result, 1 Corinthians 14:3-4:
    - a. One who prophesied spoke in intelligible speech to others so that they could be edified, 1 Cor. 14:3.
    - b. However, one who spoke in a human language that was not known or interpreted to the hearers edified only himself, for he demonstrated that he had a true gift to be able to speak as he did, but since he was not communicating facts to be understood by the hearers, he was not edifying any hearers, 1 Cor. 14:4a.
    - c. In contrast, one who prophesied edified the church because they could understand him, 1 Cor. 14:4b.
  - 2. Paul claimed he would want everyone in the Corinthian Church to be able to speak in tongues, but rather that they would prophesy, for one who prophesied was greater than one who spoke in tongues unless the tongues speaker interpreted his message so others could understand it and be edified, 1 Cor. 14:5.
  - 3. Illustrating this point, Paul wrote that if he came to the Corinthians speaking in a human language they did not understand, the exercise would be of no profit to them unless he communicated understood words that addressed a revelation, knowledge, prophecy or instruction they mentally understood, 1 Corinthians 14:6.
  - 4. The same was true regarding the use of musical instruments: instruments must give off sounds that communicate a musical composition known to the hearers or their sounds are useless, 1 Cor. 14:7-8.
  - 5. Similarly, one must utter words with the tongue that are mentally understood to edify or he speaks into the air (1 Corinthians 14:9-11), so Paul urged his readers to excel in edifying others in the church by speaking words that were understood to the mind of their hearers, 1 Corinthians 14:12.
  - 6. Paul thus directed that those who spoke in an unknown human language with the gift of tongues pray that they might be able to interpret what they say so that others who hear them might be edified, 1 Cor. 14:13.
  - 7. Paul thus urged that people with the gift of tongues should seek to communicate facts of spiritual truth to the mind of their hearers so that they might say the "Amen" in positive response because they understood and appreciated the information that had been spoken, 1 Corinthians 14:14-17.
  - 8. Typical of the apostles who could apparently exercise all of the gifts, Paul thanked God that he spoke with tongues more than all his readers, indicating that he was thus spiritually gifted of God (1 Cor. 14:18), but that in the church, he would prefer to speak five words understood by his hearers than ten thousand words that did not edify them simply because they were not understood by his hearers, 1 Corinthians 14:19.

***Lesson:*** *In critiquing the failure of the Corinthians to have their practice of using their spiritual gift of tongues interpreted to edify others and not just the tongues speaker, Paul claimed that correct spiritual edification involves the communication of spiritual facts to the minds of others that affect their hearts and cause them to say, "Amen"!*

***Application:*** *(1) May we refuse to accept any so-called "spiritual gift" that uses ecstatic, unintelligible speech as false and not of God. (2) In the use of any spiritual gift, may we focus on edifying others by communicating spiritual truth through the mind so that it gets to the heart and elicits the desired "Amen" response! (3) May we evaluate the credibility of all ministries based on the degree they communicate spiritual facts to the mind for edification as opposed to producing mere "feel good" experiences.*