

¹ *Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. NKJ*

Pursue Imperative, present, active (literal or figurative); by implication to persecute :- ensue, follow. We are to pursue love like the Jews pursued Paul.

Love the motive in the use of gifts.

Love leads to the renunciation of self.

Therefore, the exhortation to Pursue love precedes the exhortation to desire spiritual gifts and the instruction as to their use.

DESIRE: ZELOO from “zeal” (in a favorable sense, ardor;)

¹ Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. NKJ

- **Love will keep the motive pure**, both in the desire for a spiritual gift as well as in the use of the gift.
- **Love** thinks not of self but of the good of others.
- Lacking in love, the believers at Corinth had been using the sign gifts of healing and tongues to exalt themselves.

God's Grace (His love for us)

1 John 4:7-9

RESULTS OF GOD'S GRACE

1. Our love for Him
As a result of his love and grace we love Him!

1 John 4:19

2. Our obedience to Him
As a result of His loving us, we will obey
John 14:21

3. God's reward

John 14:21

Is our love the starting point or is God's grace the starting point?

To meet this tendency the Apostle exhorts them to seek rather to **prophecy.**

Thinking of Old Testament prophets, we may be inclined to limit prophecy to foretelling future events.

- This, however, was a limited part of the prophet's work, even in Old Testament days.
- His great mission was to apply the word of God to the conscience and heart for edification.
- This still applies as the service of the prophet now in Christian times; and in this sense the gift continues.

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.*

Acts 2:4-11 is the first historical occasion of this manifestation.

- Acts 2:6 gives its synonym as language. *hearing them speak in his own language.*
- Language is *dialektos* and means *the language of a region or an entire nation.*

Acts 10:44-46 is the next occurrence.

Acts 19:6 where tongues are mentioned, but not explained.

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**.*

Paul boldly maintains that **the lack of speaking to men demonstrates the inferiority** of speaking in a tongue to prophesying.

He is presumed to speak the truth— "*in spirit he speaks mysteries.*" But, the language being unknown, "*no one hears it;*" he is not understood.

Obviously Paul's concern **was the edification of the church**. He did not criticize the gift of tongues itself, but he put it in its rightful place.

CONSTABLE

*³ But one who **prophesies** speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.*

Why is **prophecy** so important?

- It is the great evidence of the presence of God amongst His people.
- We should not be content to be walking in a path of separation from obvious evil, or to be holding the precious truth that has come to us.
- We should, surely, to be concerned that there should be evidence that God is amongst us.
- **Prophecy** suggests present living communications directly from God?

³ *But one who prophesies speaks to men for **edification** and **exhortation** and **consolation**.*

Edification oikodomē

The act of building (*oikos*, "a home, the things of building up")

Exhortation parakaleō

Embodies the thought of encouragement, comfort, admonishment, and entreaty.

Consolation paraklēsis

It combines encouragement with the alleviation of grief.

This is not a definition of prophecy, but rather the result of prophesying.

⁴ One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

Among these, prophesying has the foremost place, the superiority of which over such a sign-gift as speaking in a tongue, Paul rules, is proved by this, that such a speaker speaks not to men but to God, for none hears or understands while in spirit he speaks mysteries; whereas he that prophesies speaks to men edification and encouragement and comfort.

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.

- Tongues had their place; but Paul asks, **what profit would it be to speak with tongues without an interpreter?**
- In the days of the Apostle there were still those who spoke by revelation.
- Knowledge would imply imparting to believers that which has already been revealed.
- Prophesying is rather the application of the truth to the conscience, while doctrine, or teaching, is instruction in a particular truth.

Love, then, should be the main and constant object; but there were spiritual gifts which had a place only **subordinate to love**, for the Holy Spirit, in giving and working as a consequence, **was glorifying the Lord Jesus.**

Question from CAC.

Ques. Is it more important for God to speak to us than for us to speak to God?

Ques. There is nothing said about the Spirit in this chapter; why is that?

Through the medium of spiritual persons?