

In 1 Corinthians 14:1 (NASB) we have been told,

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

Every gift is given for the blessing of the whole assembly.

The standard for using the gifts that God has given is all are to be exercised in love.

Paul singles out one gift as that which we should earnestly desire, **prophesy.**

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

So we concluded:

- 1. That we should desire spiritual gifts.**
- 2. That the gifts of the Spirit are not for anyone's individual enjoyment or glory.**
- 3. They are for the edification of the entire church.**

*5 "But I wish that ye all should speak with **tongues**, but rather that ye should prophesy. **And greater is he that prophesies than he that speaks with tongues, except he interpret in order that the assembly may receive edification.**"*

The Corinthians were very anxious for what may be called the “**showy**” gifts of the Spirit.

Through this gift the gospel had been spread in a wonderful way with tongues in the earliest period of God’s church.

The person would get a great thrill in speaking in a language that was strange and incomprehensible to others; **but there would be no blessing to the church.**

6"But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I shall speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or [in] doctrine?"

- We have no record that he ever had to learn the languages in which he spoke to the people.
- He spoke to the Greeks in their own language,
- To the Romans in theirs,
- To the Hebrews in their tongue,
- To the various barbarians in the tongues to which they were accustomed.

Revelation apokalypsis (a) the drawing away by Christ of the veil of darkness covering the Gentiles (c) the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul.

Knowledge ginōskō indicates a relation between the person "knowing" and the object known.

Prophecy prophēteia “the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God” brings the truth home to the conscience in order that it may exercise people before God.

Doctrine didachē teaching, instruction in a particular truth

*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?*

For edification it is not only necessary

- to impart the knowledge,
- to apply the word by prophecy to the conscience, and
- to teach particular truths,
- but to do so in “**words easy to be understood.**”

*⁸ For if the bugle produces an **indistinct sound**, who will
prepare himself for battle?*

If the bugle gave **an uncertain sound** or if the bugler goes out ahead of the army, but plays notes that nobody can understand, **the soldiers are unable to respond**.

Just in the same way, if a man stands up in a congregation and gives out **sounds that have no meaning** to the people, there is no edification.

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.

Distinctness and clarity, so as to be understood, is the point.

Sometimes it isn't easy to be understood, but distinct speech, so as to be intelligible: otherwise, all is lost for the hearers.

Charles H. Spurgeon said: *“I am afraid that many of my ministerial brethren must imagine that when Scripture tells them to ‘Feed my sheep,’ it means ‘Feed my giraffes,’ for they put the food so high that people would have to be giraffes to reach it.”*

*¹⁰ There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of **languages (voices)** in the world, and no kind is without meaning.*

Language or voice -phōnē - most frequently "a **voice**," is translated "**sound**" Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary

Every voice in nature has a special significance, and so words have a special meaning.

Scripture is the wonderful treasure-house that we should come from God with **a word suited** to His people.

*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.*

The word **barbarian** is an imitative word used by the Greeks of someone who did not speak the Greek language.

If ministry is to edify, it must be set forth in words “**easy to be understood**” and with the certainty of the oracles of God.

If we use words which convey no meaning to the hearers, we practically become **barbarians** speaking in some strange jargon.

*¹² So also you, since you are **zealous** of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the **edification** of the church.*

- To be understood then is essential to **edification**.
- If they really were **serious** for the power of the Spirit in their midst, **why didn't they seek to abound for the building up of one another?**
- Nothing that sets aside this great principle of **edification** can be of the Holy Spirit.
- Where the Holy Spirit is unhindered, there love prevails, and where love prevails, every expression will be for **edification**.