

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XXXIV: The Orderly Ministry Of Spiritual Gifts In The Church

(1 Corinthians 14:26-40)

I. Introduction

- A. In many evangelical churches today, "nothing, it seems, is too profane or too outrageous to be fused with 'worship'" in order "to be 'relevant' and contemporary." (John MacArthur, Jr. "How Shall We Then Worship?" in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 175) In some Charismatic circles, "whole congregations laugh uncontrollably . . . bark like dogs, roar like lions, cluck like chickens, or jump, run, and convulse. They see this as evidence that the power of God has been imparted to them," Ibid., p. 179.
- B. In contrast, 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 reveals God wants decent and orderly worship in the church (as follows):

II. The Orderly Ministry Of Spiritual Gifts In The Church, 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

- A. Paul complained that when the Corinthian believers met together to worship, each one had a psalm, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation, producing disorderly noise in the church services, 1 Cor. 14:26a ESV.
- B. This situation did not spiritually edify, for as we learned in 1 Corinthians 14:15-19, spiritual edification occurs only as God's truth is communicated through the mind to the heart so that one responds to it to relate to God! Thus, in 1 Corinthians 14:26b, Paul taught that all things in the worship service were to be done to edify.
- C. In 1 Corinthians 14:27-35, Paul then gave practical advice on how this edification was to occur (as follows):
1. Paul gave practical advice on the use of tongues in the worship service, 1 Cor. 14:27-28:
 - a. Only two or three were to minister in consecutive order, with one interpreting, 1 Corinthians 14:27.
 - b. If there was no interpreter, the believer with tongues was to stay silent in the service, silently speaking to himself and to God in his tongue so as not to disrupt the service with what did not edify others, v. 28.
 2. Paul gave practical advice on the use of prophecy in the worship service, 1 Cor. 14:29-33:
 - a. Only two or three were to prophecy in a service in consecutive order while another was to judge if the prophecy aligned with the revealed body of truth, 1 Corinthians 14:29-31 with Romans 12:6 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Romans 12:6)
 - b. Paul added that the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (1 Corinthians 14:32), that this gift, like any gift, is under the control of the one who uses it so that he can use it in an orderly way. God is not a God of confusion, but of peace in all the churches, meaning all ministry conduct must be conducted in an orderly, peaceable way so others can understand and be edified by the truth communicated, v. 33.
 3. Paul gave practical advice on the conduct of women in the worship service, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35:
 - a. Regardless what spiritual gift they had, the women were to keep silent in the worship service, not being allowed to speak for it was a shame for them to do so, 1 Corinthians 14:34. If they had questions, they were to ask their husbands at home lest they act shamefully by speaking in the service, 1 Cor. 14:35.
 - b. Paul likely referred to the cultural norms of the day in not allowing women to speak at all in the services, but in 1 Timothy 2:12, he taught that women should not teach or exercise authority over the man, but to be silent in the Church, and he appealed to the Biblical records of creation and the fall to validate this claim in 1 Timothy 2:13-14. Thus, we believe women should not teach men though we allow them to speak in a realm where they do not disobey this rule (doing a Nepaug Focus or a Childrens Conversation).
- D. Paul did not want the Corinthians to think that they were excluded from these rules as if they were the source from which all God's revelation had come or had reached, 1 Corinthians 14:36. Rather, if anyone thought he was a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what Paul was writing in this passage was commanded directly from the Lord, 1 Corinthians 14:37. Indeed, if anyone ignored this fact, he would be ignored by the Lord at the last day, 1 Corinthians 14:38; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 541.
- E. In summary, then, Paul admonished his readers earnestly to desire to prophesy and not to forbid the exercise of the true gift of tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:39. However, all things relative to the use of these and other spiritual gifts were to be done "decently and in order," 1 Corinthians 14:40 ESV.

Lesson: *Since spiritual edification occurs only as God's truth is communicated through the mind to the heart of the hearer, in church services where many believers meet together, God commands us to act in a decent and orderly way so that edification can occur. Specifically, one man should minister at a time in a peaceable way, with a limit on how many minister in a single meeting and with the women submitting to the ministry of the men.*

Application: *May we function in God's decent and orderly way in the church that believers may be edified.*