

## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy. <sup>2</sup> For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. <sup>3</sup> But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. <sup>4</sup> He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. <sup>5</sup> I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. <sup>6</sup> Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? <sup>7</sup> And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? <sup>8</sup> For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? <sup>9</sup> So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. <sup>10</sup> There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without signification. <sup>11</sup> Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me. <sup>12</sup> Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church. <sup>13</sup> Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret. <sup>14</sup> For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. <sup>16</sup> Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? <sup>17</sup> For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. <sup>18</sup> I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: <sup>19</sup> Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue. <sup>20</sup> Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. <sup>21</sup> In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. <sup>22</sup> Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. <sup>23</sup> If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? <sup>24</sup> But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: <sup>25</sup> And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. <sup>26</sup> How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. <sup>27</sup> If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. <sup>28</sup> But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. <sup>29</sup> Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. <sup>30</sup> If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. <sup>31</sup> For ye may

all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.<sup>32</sup> And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.<sup>33</sup> For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.<sup>34</sup> Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law.<sup>35</sup> And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.<sup>36</sup> What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?<sup>37</sup> If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.<sup>38</sup> But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.<sup>39</sup> Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.<sup>40</sup> Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:1-40).

**We must remember that the context of I Corinthians chapter 14 follows what has already been taught in chapters 12 and 13. The sign gifts would one day cease.** I Corinthians chapter 14 details how to discern between genuine prophecies and the tongues that came from God and false prophecies and tongues that do not (**this refers to that period of time during the transitional period between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant**).

The intent of chapter 14 is to define the operations of God. **If the gift is genuine, it will fall within the perimeters Paul defines in chapter 14. If the gift is not of God, it will be manifested by the fact it does not fall within the defined perimeters.** Paul is defining how God operates.

Two governing principles are given in chapter 14 which establish God’s methods in everything He does.

1. If a state of disorder exists, it is not of God (v 33; “confusion” is from the Greek word *akatastasia* [ak-at-as-tah-see'-ah] meaning a state of disorder). When God does something, it is always done in an orderly fashion (see 14:40).
2. Whatever God does, it is for a specific purpose. 1 Corinthians 14:2-5 states “edification” [*oikodome* (oy-kod-om-ay)]; the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness) is God’s purpose in both tongues and prophecy. If it does not edify, it is not of God (key word in verses 2-22 is the word “understanding,” or a derivative thereof, used 9 times).

**The church at Corinth was a carnal lot. The majority of those in the church at Corinth were saved out of the pagan mystery religions (I Corinthians 12:2).** These people were incorporating some of the religious practices of the pagan mystery religions with their Christianity.

“Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led” (I Corinthians 12:2).

**These mystery religions all evolved out of Babylon from the occult practices of Nimrod that resulted in the building of the Tower of Babel and God’s confounding of the languages ending in the dispersal of the people into different**

**nations (language groups).** The origins of the mystery religions were demonic. The supernatural happenings of the mystery religions were demonic.

Common to the mystery religions was the practice of *Ecstasism* and *Enthusiasm*. S. Angus, in his book **The Mystery Religions** (New York: Dover Publications, 1975) details these two practices.

“...Ecstasy (*ekstasis*) and Enthusiasm (*enthusiasmos*), both of which might be induced by vigil and fasting, tense religious expectancy, whirling dances, physical stimuli, the contemplation of sacred objects, the effect of stirring music, inhalation of fumes, revivalistic contagion (such as happened in the church at Corinth), hallucination, suggestion, and other means belonging to the apparatus of the Mysteries.”

**Both Ecstasy and Enthusiasm were used to promote a heightened sense of euphoria and human experience.** In this euphoric state, the participant experiences a feeling of having communed with deity. His involvement has been with the supernatural realm, but not the divine. *Ecstasism* and *Enthusiasm* were Satanic in origin.

**We have two types of tongues in I Corinthians 14.** Since Paul would not be present to discern every tongues experience and the gift of tongues was still a viable reality at this juncture in the historical transition between dispensations, he seeks to regulate them by the process of elimination.

**The first type of tongues is *ecstatic tongues* which is denoted by the italicized word “unknown.”** This is the tongues experience he seeks to eliminate. Genuine “tongues” (which were always known languages) were used to communicate truth to someone who would not be able to understand otherwise.

**If God is communicating, He will always do so with the intent of edification and understanding (I Corinthians 14:1-22).** In the only two examples of tongues in the book of Acts (Acts 2:4-11 and Acts 10:44-46), both communications came with understanding by the hearers. The gift of tongues was not in the speaking, but in the hearing.

“<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. <sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? <sup>8</sup> And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:4-11).

This may have been the common experience of the Apostle Paul (see 1 Corinthians 14:18) as he preached throughout his missionary journeys. I doubt very much if Paul was able to speak all the languages of all the countries he started churches in.

**Paul's purpose in I Corinthians chapter 14 is to establish a process of elimination of the counterfeit.** If an unbeliever was not present, the tongue gift was counterfeit (not of God, God did not cause the "tongues" event). First, the purpose of tongues was a "sign" to unbelievers, not believers.

"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe" (I Corinthians 14:22).

Second, if more than two or three people spoke in tongues at any given service and if it was not one after the other (not at the same time), the tongues gift was counterfeit.

"If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most by three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret" (I Corinthians 14:27).

Third, if someone was not able to interpret (understand) what he said, the tongue gift was counterfeit (I Corinthians 14:27). If there was no one who could understand what the tongues speaker was saying, he was to "keep silence" (stop talking out loud). This tongues experience was to be stopped.

"<sup>27</sup> If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most by three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret. <sup>28</sup> But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God" (I Corinthians 14:27-28).

### **The authenticity of prophecies was also to be challenged.**

"<sup>29</sup> Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. <sup>30</sup> If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. <sup>31</sup> For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. <sup>32</sup> And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (I Corinthians 14:29-32).

Only two or three prophets were allowed to speak at any given service. All those present ("other" is actually plural) are to judge the prophecy according to accepted prophecies and the revealed truth by the Apostles. God is consistent in truth. If new revelation contradicts old revelation, that which contradicts is false. Prophets were to speak in an orderly fashion, one after the other.

"<sup>10</sup> And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> These

were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:10-11).

“<sup>19</sup> We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: <sup>20</sup> Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:19-21).

**If a woman spoke in tongues it was counterfeit.** Women were not allowed to prophesy or speak in tongues. The purpose of tongues was teaching (edification) and women were not allowed to teach.

“<sup>34</sup> Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. <sup>35</sup> And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (I Corinthians 14:34-35).

“<sup>11</sup> Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. <sup>12</sup> But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was first formed, then Eve. <sup>14</sup> And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:11-14).

**Two different Greek words are used for “silence” in the above verses.** In I Corinthians (regarding tongues) the Greek word is *sigao* (see-gah'-o) meaning to keep in silence or stop talking. In I Timothy 2:11 and 12 the Greek word is *hesuchia* (hay-soo-khee'-ah), which means quietness. It is a description of the life of one who stays at home doing her own work and not officiously meddling with the affairs of others.

Tongues have passed away. There is no gift of tongues for today. However, if the modern day practice of tongues were consistently evaluated according to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, every one of them would be proven false for the following reasons.

1. Those who practice modern day tongues state tongues are given to prove a person is saved. This is a contradiction against I Corinthians 14:22; “tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.”
2. The purpose of tongues was to communicate edifying truth, not give prophecy. Most modern day tongues are used to prophecy.
3. Modern day tongues are usually done in great confusion, disorder, with many people speaking all at the same time. If more than one person at a time speaks in tongues or more than three in any given service, it is not God that is doing it.
4. Women are not allowed to speak in tongues. If women speak in tongues, it is not God that is doing it.

***“The tragedy in accepting the counterfeit is that we forfeit the genuine”***  
(John F. MacArthur, Jr., The Charismatics).

## Chapter Five

### Questions for Discussion

1. Discuss why it is essential to understand 1 Corinthians chapter 14 from the context of chapters 12 and 13.

2. Discuss the two governing principles given in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 which establish God's methods in everything He does. Give the Scripture references for each principle.

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:2. Discuss the two practices of the Mystery Religions (*Ecstasism* and *Enthusiasm*) and why this is important to understand in our interpretation of what was going on at Corinth.

4. What are the two types of tongues in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and how can we know which one is which in the KJV Bible?

5. Read Acts 2:4-11. Here is a genuine example of a tongues experience. Discuss the characteristics of this compared to the characteristics of the tongues of 1 Corinthians 14.

6. 1 Corinthians chapter 14 gives five ways to determine if tongues were counterfeit. From the following references, discuss each way counterfeit tongues can be distinguished.

A. 1 Corinthians 14:22:

B. 1 Corinthians 14:27a:

C. 1 Corinthians 12:27b:

D. 1 Corinthians 14:28:

E. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35:

7. Read 1 Corinthians 14:29-32. Discuss the three ways the authenticity of prophets were to be challenged and the simple governing rule for all new revelation by prophecy

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
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B. \_\_\_\_\_  
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C. \_\_\_\_\_  
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D. \_\_\_\_\_  
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