

Abuse of Tongues
Lesson #26
1 Corinthians 14:20-40

1. After clarifying the role of the gift of tongues in the church, Paul then addressed the abuse of tongues in the church at Corinth. What was the root of the problem?
(1 Corinthians 14:20a)

2. What did Paul say they should do about it? (1 Corinthians 14:20b)

3. Quoting the prophet Isaiah, Paul warned the Corinthians through the example of the people of Israel who refused to heed Isaiah's warnings. God said that he would send foreigners to speak to them in an unknown language. Would Israel listen then?
(1 Corinthians 14:21)

4. What, then, did Paul say was the purpose of the spiritual gift of tongues?
(1 Corinthians 14:22a)

5. What about the spiritual gift of prophecy? (1 Corinthians 14:22b)

6. Why did Paul say it was important that in the church one should speak prophecy and not in tongues? (1 Corinthians 14:23-25)

7. When believers come together in worship, what did Paul say was present in that service?
(1 Corinthians 14:26a)

8. How did Paul say that these must be done? (1 Corinthians 14:26b)

9. What guidelines did Paul set forth if someone should speak in tongues in church?
(1 Corinthians 14:27, 28)
10. What guidelines did he give for using the gift of prophecy in the church?
(1 Corinthians 14:29-32)
11. Why is it so important that spiritual gifts be used in the church as God intended?
(1 Corinthians 14:33a)
12. The next verse has caused great difficulty in understanding what Paul meant and how, or if, it is to be applied today. *"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says."*
(1 Corinthians 14:33b, 34) These verses seem totally out of place. So in order to understand this verse, or any difficult passage, the key is always to keep it in context. This text is included in chapter 14 which is one topic. What was the issue that Paul was dealing with?
13. Look closely at verse 35 and try to determine the two key words and the issues that Paul was addressing.
14. Was Paul saying that women may not use their spiritual gifts in the church?
(1 Corinthians 11:5)

15. Continuing with the topic of the importance of proper use of spiritual gifts, Paul asked them two questions: *"Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?"* (1 Corinthians 14:26) The answer to both questions is "no!" Based upon this chapter and what you've learned previously in this letter, what impression are you getting of this church of Corinth?
16. Apparently there were those who felt that they were spiritually gifted – implied super gifted. What words of warning did Paul give to the church about such a person(s)? (1 Corinthians 14:37, 38)
17. After spending several chapters on the abuse of spiritual gifts within the church, what were Paul's final instructions on the gifts of tongues and prophecy? (1 Corinthians 14:39, 40)
18. **Reflect:** In this chapter, Paul dealt with some difficult issues in the church at Corinth related to the gift of tongues and (the role of) women. Paul and the church at Corinth clearly understood the issues so Paul didn't give many details on what the actual problems were. From your study of this lesson, what is the best way for the modern believer to approach passages that are unclear in the Bible?
19. What practical steps can you take to help gain clarity?
20. Most importantly, when it comes to passages that are unclear, what attitude will you as a believer take toward other believers who hold different views on these unclear passages? Refer back to chapter 13. What do you think Paul would say to us today?