



**PRELUDE TO PENTECOST
EARNESTLY DESIRE
DEVOTION AND DISCUSSION GUIDE**

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 ESV

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

Opening Thoughts:

- When you think of Spiritual gifts, what comes to your mind? Why do you think we are given Spiritual gifts? Are they for us personally, for others, or for the church as a whole?
- Read 1 Corinthians 14:1 as written below, which includes definitions for various words in the verse: **Pursue** (intensely press forward) **love** (*agape*, Christlike love), and **earnestly desire** (be jealous for, set your heart upon, and intensely desire) the **spiritual gifts** (*charismata*), **especially that you may prophesy** (speak forth what God is speaking).
- As you meditate on this verse, how does your life exemplify, or fail to exemplify, these instructions from Paul? Paul did not want the church to be unaware of the gifts, they were given for a reason.

Key Takeaway: The gifts were given to embolden our faith and to build the church.

- Let's look at the purpose, protocol, and pursuit of the gifts of Pentecost.

1) There is a purpose to the gifts of Pentecost.

- **To glorify the Son.** Read 1 Corinthians 12:3. Who is being lifted up by the gifts? How is this confirmed in 1 John 4:1-3? What warning can you glean from this? Have you ever been tempted to lift up the one with the gift rather than the gift-giver?
- The anointing on a man or woman is not God's endorsement of the man, the message, or the method.
- Read 2 Corinthians 4:7. What do you learn about gifts from this verse? God gives His ability to those who give their availability.
- **To edify the Church.** Reread 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. The definition of the Greek word translated 'edify' means to build up, strengthen, to make more able. The power of God works through the gift, making us more able. Paul says several things about speaking in tongues in these verses. What are they?
- Read Jude 1:20, along with 2 in the passage above. What is the purpose for an individual to speak in tongues?

- What does Paul say in verses 3-5 about speaking in tongues in the church? Have you ever been part of a corporate gathering when tongues and interpretation brought edification, encouragement, or comfort to the church?
- Pray in tongues and let your spirit edify you! Not only will you personally be built up, but this gift is a key that unlocks other gifts for your personal edification.
- **To identify the sinner.** Read 1 Corinthians 14:23-25. What are some things you learn about the unbeliever when the gift of prophecy is released in the church? Is this not the reason for the gathering of the saints? The prophetic word must go forth so that the church will be edified and the sinner identified?

2) There is a protocol to the gifts of Pentecost.

- Read 1 Corinthians 14:26 and 40. The corporate assembly is a prophetic gathering and all present must anticipate and receive the prophetic. Expect to receive a prophetic word, be ready to write it down. What should you do if you feel like this word is for the assembly that is gathered? How do you make sure all things are done “decently and in order?” What are some things you learned from the message about the chaos Paul was addressing in the Corinthian church? Paul laid out three protocols for the corporate gathering.
- **Protocol provides clarity.** Read 1 Corinthians 14:27-33. Can you list the things you learn about clarity from these verses? What experiences, positive or negative, have you had regarding the operating of the gifts in a corporate gathering? How could the negative experiences have been avoided? What can you learn from the positive experiences?
- Principle: All should be able to hear and understand.
- **Protocol provides a covering.** Read 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 11:3-5. Within the context of the chaos, Paul addressed the problem of authority. What can you learn from these verses about authority in the corporate gathering? In other places in Scripture, does Paul affirm women in ministry? How does Scripture affirm that all are to be under authority?
- Principle: When the pattern is right, the glory falls. All should be under authority (men and women). What does Scripture have to say about those that desire to minister in a corporate setting? How does your walk with Christ line up with these principles? Are you ready to be used by God to speak a prophetic word to the body of Christ? (For a detailed list and the Scriptures that correspond, see Pastor’s notes in YouVersion Bible App.)
- **Protocol prevents confusion.** Read 1 Corinthians 14:33. Anything that creates disorder, confusion, or breaks peace is outside the heart of God. Consider the core values of Grace: honor, humility, hunger, and holiness. Which of these must be present in the life of a believer to operate in the giftings in a corporate assembly?
- Principle: We should not make it difficult for those who are coming to Christ.

3) There is a pursuit to the gifts of Pentecost.

- Read 1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 5, 12, 31, 39-40. What words and phrases does Paul use to exhort the believer to earnestly desire the gifts? Does it seem more like a suggestion or an instruction? What does Paul mean by saying he would “show you a more excellent way?” (Verse 31).
- What does 1 Corinthians 13 have to say about the “most excellent way? Why do you think the KJV translators chose the word “charity” for the Greek word *agape*? What are some words in chapter 13 that express what love looks like?
- Read 1 Corinthians 13:1. Paul instructs believers to earnestly desire *charisma*, (spiritual gifts). If *charisma* without character creates chaos, what does *charisma* without charity create?
- Principle: A gift given without love is without true value (worthless noise). Love is the most excellent way!

Application:

- **Takeaway: The gifts were given to embolden our faith and to build the church.**
- Where and how will you begin your earnest pursuit of the gifts?
- Review the following Biblical Test for someone who desires to minister, including operating in the spiritual gifts:
 1. Are you a member of a local church, attending regularly?
 2. Do you tithe, freely giving without control?
 3. Do you have a true Pastor (shepherd) over you?
 4. Are you disciplined in sound Biblical study?
 5. Do you have a healthy marriage?
 6. Do your kids respect you?
 7. Are you living holy (are you in willful sin)?
 8. Do you have a good reputation?
- Are there any of these areas where you fall short? How can you make some changes to align your life with Scripture in order to be prepared to operate in the gifts in a corporate assembly?