**Growing in Grace, Growing in Community: Life Lessons on Maturity with the Corinthians**

***Tamed Tongues and Winsome Worship -- The Two Things Which Should Characterize Our Praise Gatherings***

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

With these verses the Apostle Paul concludes his discussion of the spiritual gifts in general and tongues in particular. He lays out even more guidelines and gives a summary conclusion that is both clear and passionate. Worship must be both edifying and orderly, and so indiscriminate, uninterpreted tongues were out of place on two counts. It is only when we put our prejudices aside and take the text of Scripture as it was written that we grow, are led, and are at one.

Let’s review the key points Paul has made. . .

In Chapter 12, Tongues is only one of many gifts, and is really last in their order.

In Chapter 13, Unless administered in love, even the “tongues of angels” is just noise.

Then, in chapter 14. . .

* “First, remember that a spiritual gift is for the assembly not the individual.” vv. 1-5
* “So, think about it: Unintelligible sounds don’t communicate!” vv. 6-12
* “And as impressive as the gift of tongues is, it simply is non-edifying to others.” vv. 13-19
* “And recall that this sign to a rebellious nation is not for believers in church!” vv. 20-25
* “Now, how does all of this work in practice? Let’s apply the principles. . .”
* On the Principle of Edification:

Each aspect of worship must build up others. v. 26

Diversity among the gifts of the Spirit must end in the Unity of the Body of Christ.

* On the Principle of Order:

Tongues one at a time, at the most three. vv. 27, 28

In the end, the gift of tongues is dispensable and if used, must be kept to a minimum.

Prophecies, too, must be given one at a time, and orderly. vv. 29-31

Even new revelation must be orderly and controlled in respect and love for others.

(“Prophecy” is not the giving of a lesson or sermon, but the special revelation of God which was to be discerned, interpreted, and applied by the assembly.)

Roles of men and women are defined in Scripture. vv. 32-35

The coming of the Spirit brought power and clarity, not confusion and negation of creation order.

Apostolic guidelines are modeled in Scripture. vv. 36-40

The coming of the Spirit brought stability and uniformity, not randomness and disarray of forms.

**Growth Principle #18 -- The spiritually mature Christian seeks the good of others in corporate worship rooted in God’s Word and apostolic example.**

1. God’s Spirit and Common Sense

Perhaps because we think of God as unpredictable, many seem to believe that the presence of God’s Spirit allows or even encourages all sorts of excesses and abnormalities. While God can do what He chooses, He is, as Paul explains here, a God of order, predictability, and self-control. Paul here helps tune the Corinthians into His desire to have us build up one another when we come together, and that requires that we practice order, predictability and self-control. The summary sentence is that “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”

2. God’s Spirit and Creation Order For the third time in this book, Paul explains that male/female distinctions and roles are not done away with in Christ. See 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; 11:2-16; 14:33-35. In each of these passages, Paul appeals both to creation order taught in Scripture and repeated by apostolic authority. The gifts of the Spirit do not replace or change God’s mind on how we view men and women in family and church. Parallels are in 1 Timothy 2, 3; 1 Peter 3; *etc.*



***Going Deeper--For Growth Groups***

1. What are the implications of edification in worship applied to our culture? The implications of order? How are these principles sometimes ignored in corporate worship? Why does Paul so emphasize the importance of prophecy over tongues? What might be applications for non-charismatics?

2. Why does Paul need to remind the Corinthians that the roles of men and women are not changed by their giftedness? Why is this idea not popular today? How can it be abused?