



HAMMERING IT OUT

Studies in *1 Corinthians*

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Growing in Spirit & Truth

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And In This Corner... 1 Corinthians 13-14



Authentic Christianity is hammered out in the details of life.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God’s pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God’s family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for God’s mission

Before the start of every boxing match in days gone by the referee would announce, “And in this corner...” and then name the two fighters vying for victory. In the study this week the apostle Paul talks about a couple of things that, when pitted against each other, one is clearly superior. The first of these is love in chapter 13. The church at Corinth was enamored with the experience of spiritual gifts and seemed to think that these were the most important ingredients of maturity in Christ. Paul told them of a better way at the end of chapter 12, and then in 13 explored the preeminence of love. He told them that even if they spoke in angelic tongues, had the gifts of prophecy, knowledge and understanding, had faith to move mountains, or even sacrificed all

their possessions or life itself, if love wasn’t present these accomplished nothing. God’s love, which we are to embody, is patient and kind, and is not jealous, vain, or arrogant. It is not rude, selfish or hyper-sensitive, does not keep a list of wrongs, is happy for the one loved, bears with their faults, keeps trusting them, hopes for progress, and never gives up. Love never fails, but all the spiritual gifts will vanish one day; they are only for our present incomplete experience on this earth. Love, though, along with faith and hope will remain forever; and of these three, it is the greatest. Having established the primacy of love over the gifts, Paul then compares the gifts of prophecy and tongues, showing the priority of prophecy. We are to pursue the discovery of our gift and we should start with

prophecy. The reason is that it edifies, encourages and consoles, while tongues, by itself, merely confuses others, even if the individual feels better. Unless interpreted the gift of tongues profits very little. Prophecy builds up and it brings conviction which leads to salvation. Finally, Paul encourages propriety in worship. The standard is that all things must be done decently and in order. While all may manifest spiritual gifts in worship they are to do it in a way that builds up the church rather than causing confusion. In summary prophecy wins over tongues, but love wins over all.

Study Questions for 1 Corinthians 13-14

(For answers go to [http://www.celebrationnet.com/abf/html/study questions](http://www.celebrationnet.com/abf/html/study%20questions))

1. Read 1 Cor 13:1-3. What spiritual activities are compared to love (v1, 2, 3) and why do you think these were chosen? If love does not accompany these activities, what are their results like (v1, 2, 3)?	
2. From 13:4-7 what is true love like (v4, 6-7) and not like (v4, 5, 6)? How did these apply to the Corinthian church? Where can you apply these in your life specifically?	
3. In 13:8-13 what 3 virtues are permanent (v8, 13) and which is greatest (v13)? What will cease (v8-9) and when (v10-12)? What do you think “the perfect” (v10) is and what will it be like when it comes (v11-12)?	

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I Corinthians 13-14 - Daily Study Questions (cont)

4. Looking at 1 Cor 14:1-5 what does Paul encourage (v1)? What 2 gifts are then compared (v5) and which is superior (v1, 5)? Why (v2-3, 4, 5)?

5. Based on 14:6-12 when is the gift of tongues beneficial (v6, 9) and why (v12)? What 2 illustrations are used (v7-8)? What, in essence, are these tongues (v10-11)?

6. Read 14:13-19. What guidance is given for using the gift of tongues (v13)? Why (v14, 16-17)? What was Paul's conclusion for himself based on this (v15, 18-19)?

7. From 14:20-25 what is encouraged (v20) and to what understanding does this lead (v21-22)? Explain. Compare the different results of tongues and prophecy (v23-25).

8. According to 14:26-33 what would a typical worship service look like (v26), with what restrictions (v27-28, 29-32)? What basic principle should be followed (v26, 33)?

9. In 14:34-36 what was Paul's instruction (v34, 35) and what was the basis (v34)? What does he rhetorically ask (v36) and how does this probably relate to his instruction?

10. In 14:37-40 what did Paul state (v37-38) and why do you think he did? How did he summarize his teaching in chapter 14 (v39) and the underlying rationale (v40)?

11 Review 1 Cor 13-14. In your own words why is love superior to any spiritual gift, and why is prophecy superior to tongues? Why should we, in the context of love, seek to know and use our spiritual gift and what should always govern its use (14:12; 14:40)?

Scripture to Remember

“But now faith, hope, love,
abide these three ; but the
greatest of these is love.”

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NASB)

Celebration Fellowship

Help—Hope—Healing

We're on the web

www.thehospitalchurch.com

Life Group Questions—*Finding Freedom in Community (Acts 2:42-47)*
(Using questions from Sunday's sermon, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship, helping us to grow in Christ.)

1. Share some of the personal benefits of having close relationships. Of the 10 things listed in the message that community frees us from, which means most to you?
2. Read Acts 2:42-47. Identify the various things the early church did “in community”. In what ways do you think community enhanced these activities?
3. Talk about the way the early church expressed love (v44-45). How can we do that today through our Life Groups—and what should it look like for this life group?
4. Discuss the importance of investigating Bible truth in a Life Group setting. How well do people know basic biblical truths and what difference does this make?
5. Review the definition of fellowship. Of the 4 things in Life Group that we “share in common” - our story, experience, wisdom and resources—which is most helpful?
6. Why is it important to embrace evangelism and mission as a vital part of the Life Group experience? What are some ways this can be accomplished?
7. Share with one another what Life Group has meant to you.