

Paul's First Letter to The Corinthians
Lesson 6

In the last lesson we defined the nine ways that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself through the believer. In the class we used examples of how the Holy Spirit manifests Himself through many of our church leaders. Now let's look at some examples of how the Holy Spirit works through you.

Word of wisdom - Suppose a friend comes to you, seeking your advice and saying "My husband wants a divorce." She is a believer and the husband is not. The Holy Spirit prompts you to remember the wisdom of the Lord. You open the scriptures and read to her the appropriate wisdom of God.

1 Cor. 7:13-15 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. ¹⁵Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.

In other situations you may simply quote a favorite verse and the Holy Spirit uses that wisdom of the Lord to move the heart of another person, without your knowledge or intent. This is a word of wisdom.

Word of knowledge – Suppose someone presents a problem in their life that the Scripture does not directly address, yet there are principles in the Scripture that can be applied to the problem. Once again the Holy Spirit prompts you to relate a passage or story from the Scripture, applying it to the situation. Such is the case when a faithful family of this church brought their son and his girlfriend for Godly council. The girl's father did not want her to date this young man. While the Scripture does not directly address this situation, it does contain a passage where we can draw an application. The Holy Spirit reminded me of the story of Jacob desiring Rachel as his wife. In Genesis 29 Jacob met a young girl by the name of Rachel. He kissed her and he was smitten. Later he had a conversation with her father and an agreement was made. Applying this story to the situation the boy was sent to speak with the father, with the warning that the first visit with the father did not work out so well for Jacob, but he second did. This is a word of knowledge.

Faith – Suppose you live in a neighborhood where you are the only believer. Be assured that the other neighbors are watching you. They are listening to your words and they are watching your actions and deeds. They see how you live your life. The believer should live out his faith at his home as well as at his work. The Holy Spirit will use your lives to minister to the neighbors.

Healing – Suppose a family has a disaster within their family. You take the time to write a note, send a card, or drop by. Nothing in the note, card, or even your visit is especially noteworthy, yet it means the world to the other person because the Holy Spirit brings a special healing because out of your effort.

Effecting of miracles – There are jobs to be done in this world, jobs that God wants done. In the heart of a single person the Holy Spirit will tug to the point that he will yield and begin His work. The job begins and others begin to join the effort. Soon the job is well on its way and you are amazed at all the Lord has done. The Church is a good example of this manifestation of the Holy Spirit. People begin to gather together and before long the few are many. Truly, no one can take the credit for the work because it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church was being built.

Prophecy – All across Christianity teachers are preparing lessons for their weekly Bible Studies. In our efforts the lessons are planned and delivered yet the Holy Spirit speaks in the minds and hearts of the listeners and delivers the message they need. That's why the Lord calls it the "Foolishness of preaching." With all the things that we need to do to put food on the table and care for the household, as well as all that is involved with work, why in the world do we take time to listen to the teaching of someone we hardly know? It seems like "foolishness", yet it is the very means by which the Holy Spirit delivers the Lord's Word to each believer.

Distinguishing of spirits – Also called "discernment" in the other versions, this is where the Holy Spirit moves in the lives of believers to keep them from harm or where He provides the believers with an insight into the personality or situations at hand. It is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit telling you, or someone through you, that something they are about to do or get involved with is godly or ungodly. It is the Holy Spirit helping to make wise choices in this life.

Kinds of tongues – Most believers read this and immediately jump to the conclusion that this means some special unlearned language. Yet this is much simpler than that. This can be as simply as the Holy Spirit speaking to others through the languages that you normally speak. Through the conversations you have throughout the day, the Holy Spirit speaks to the hearts of other.

Interpretation of tongues – Like "Kinds of tongues" this manifestation is much simpler than taught in many circles. It is simply the Holy Spirit using you to explain in clear understandable language something that has been said by someone else. Even something said in English might need to be explained in English to an English speaking person. This is what I have done in this lesson. I have interpreted what the English version of 1 Corinthians 12:8-12 actually says so you can understand it!

How important are all these manifestations of the Holy Spirit? Paul gives an application to help us understand their importance.

1 Cor. 12:12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just

as He desired. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³and those *members* of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly *members come to* have more abundant seemliness, ²⁴whereas our seemly *members* have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that *member* which lacked, ²⁵that there should be no division in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

The Comparison of the Manifestation of the Spirit and the complex makeup of the Body – The point in this long example of how the body needs all its varied parts is to drive home the need for the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself within the body of the church through the different believers. Each manifestation is important to the health of the church and the Holy Spirit will manifest as He wills.

1 Cor. 12:²⁷Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues. ²⁹All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they? ³⁰All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

The Offices of the Church – There is an order in which the church was established. In the upper room the first officers of the church were the apostles. Leaving the upper room and going into the streets of Jerusalem, the people heard the prophets, in this case the forth tellers or preachers preaching the gospel. Then came the teachers who answered the questions of the new believers and shared with them all that they had learned at the feet of Jesus and the Apostles. Then there was the counselors who brought the needed words of comfort which healed the sinful soul. The believers began to help one another within the body of believers, selling what they had to care for the needs of others. Deacons were selected to make sure the widows were taken care of forming a formal administration within the church. And finally, missionaries were sent to the ends of the world to learn the languages and share the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. No, not all were apostles, for the Lord Jesus selected them personally and there were only 13. No, not all are prophets/preachers, but through the foolishness of preaching the gospel is being spread to the world. No, not all are teachers, but the ones who are teachers are training the babes in Christ into strong mature believers. All do not have the power to get the jobs done, but some will through the power of the Holy Spirit. All can not bring words of healing and speak the various languages, or even translate the gospel into another language, but the Holy Spirit is working through some believers to do this work. There is nothing wrong with desiring the greatest manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but however the Holy Spirit is working through you, you are just as important to the body of Christ today as the first Apostles were in 27 – 30 AD.

But wait! Paul wants to show you something more important to focus your life on rather than worrying about how the Holy Spirit is manifesting Himself through your life. That should be the least of our concerns and the least of our worries. There is a more excellent way of fulfilling your role in the church than seeking a manifestation of the Spirit or an office in the organization of the church. What is that more excellent way? You must include love in your life!

1 Cor. 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

No Love, No Profit – In the typical Hebrew pattern, Paul makes a variety of comparisons. Can Paul speak in the tongues of men? Absolutely! He knew many languages. We know he knew Classical Greek, Koine Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew, Latin, and some Chaldeon. Since Italian was already in the Roman countries, he probably knew this language too.

Can Paul speak in the tongues of angels? Absolutely not! He was not an angel! However it did not matter whether he could speak in “angel” or not, or any of the other human languages that we know he spoke, without living the life of “love” as a Christian, all these languages are useless for the cause of Christ and Paul’s usefulness to be used by the Holy Spirit.

Could Paul tell the future? No! But the Lord spoke the future through him. Did Paul know all the mysteries and all knowledge? No! In addition God did not reveal all the mysteries and knowledge to Paul. But even if he had revealed all to Paul, if Paul’s life was not one of Christian love, he could not be a useful tool to be used by the Holy Spirit.

Like wise, there would be little profit for Paul to sell all he had and give his life if his life was not one that exemplified Christ’s love.

As opposed to our usually understanding that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are things that we can control, they are not. Paul’s example here is for the purpose of conveying the idea that without living a life of Christian love, we are useless vessels, unworthy of being used by the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through.

1 Cor. 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of* prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The Greatest of these is Love – We are not a religion, we are “love” for one another! That’s what Christianity is all about and sadly many Christians have forgotten this fact or never knew it in the first place. Anything we do, if it is not based in love it is useless. Our entire lives are to be immersed in love, not in just a moment here or there, but every moment we are to be living a life of love.

When the Perfect Comes – In this passage Paul is talking about our arrival into the presence of the Lord. It does not come until this life is over for each of us. While we are not perfect in our human earthly bodies, the Lord wants us to live in love.

1 Cor. 14:¹Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.

Pursue Love Yet Desire Earnestly Spiritual – Love is what we must pursue while we live in this life. Yet we should earnestly desire that the Lord will allow the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself through our lives, striving to tell-forth the gospel! This is the easy one. How do you do this? Simply be ready to share with everyone what the Lord has done for you!

1 Cor. 14:³But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

⁴One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

Tongue – Language – Interpret - As Paul continues to explain the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, he pauses to explain the importance of forth-telling the Word of God or what is called “prophecy” or “preaching.” The preaching of the word is for the edification of men and the church while speaking in a tongue is only edifying to the individual. To understand this we must come to an understanding of the three words tongue – language – interpret.

To grasp an understanding of this passage and the remaining verses in Chapter 14, let’s define these three pivotal words in the Scripture. Paul uses the actual word “Tongue” which means the physical tongue found in a person’s mouth, but in Koina Greek the tongue was seen as the source of the Greek that was spoken by the person. Therefore a person’s tongue might have been Greek, or in our case “English.” In Chapter 14 the word “Tongue” means the known language we speak. In Paul’s case he spoke Classical Greek, Koina Greek, Latin, Italian, Hebrew, and Aramaic at the least.

When Paul uses the word “Language” he actually uses the word that means “voice, disclosure, or tone.” It is the noise you make when you speak. It is the audible formation of the words you use and the clarity with which you use those words.

When Paul uses the word “interpret” it is the Koina Greek word that means to “explain thoroughly.” By implication in the text it means to “translate” but this does not specifically mean to translate from another language. In our case it could mean to explain in “plain English” what we have just said in “English.” It means to put it on the level of the listener.

Let’s add to this the fact that Paul makes an important point when he says “one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.” The point is unless the listener understands the message that is being spoken it is useless for the building up of the church. In our case, if a person tries to speak to an audience in a version of English that is incomprehensible, that person’s message is of no use.

With this as a background the rest of Chapter 14 becomes understandable. In an uncharacteristic move, I will add words to help explain the text as we read it below.

1 Cor. 14:6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, [foreign language] what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? 7 Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? 8 For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech [language] that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages [voices, tones, or disclosures] in the world, and no *kind* is without meaning. 11 If then I do not know the meaning of the language, [voices, tones, or disclosures] I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. 12 So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church. 13 Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue [language] pray that he may interpret [explain]. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, [language] my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What is *the outcome* then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also. 16 Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. 18 I thank God, I speak in tongues [languages] more than you all; 19 however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue [foreign language].

How will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say "Amen" – This is the telling phrase in this passage. If there is a person setting in the congregation that does not speak the language being spoken, how will the ungifted, or uneducated in that language know when to say "amen?" How will he know that the prayer is over? He does not understand what is being said. The prayer of thanks is of no value. The messages delivered in the church must be in the language of the majority of the people for that message to be fruitful to the congregation.

1 Cor. 14:20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME," says the Lord. 22 So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy *is for a sign*, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. 23 If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

Strange Tongues – This is a very loose translation of Isaiah 28:11-12 which states:

Isaiah 28:11-12 Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, 12 He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen.

In Isaiah, the immature Jews who had little understanding in the Word of God and paid little attention to it, were warned by the Lord repeatedly of their fate, yet for the most part they did not listen. Paul does not want the Church at Corinth to make this same mistake. Likewise it is permissible to listen to someone who speaks in a strange foreign language, but this is strictly for the

believer. When a young Russian came to our church and gave her two minute testimony in Russian, my heart and soul could hear her love for the Lord in the few short sentences even though I did not understand a single word she said. While the testimony was short and bearable, the non-Christians in the audience could not even feel her love for the Lord because the Holy Spirit did not dwell within them. It wasn't what she said that mattered to me, it was the Holy Spirit who manifested Himself through her that made such an impact on my heart.

But when an unbeliever is in the audience the words that are spoken must be in the language of the people. Plus, that person speaking must be delivering the message of the gospel. It is by the gospel that men come to know the Lord and not by the speaking of different languages.

1 Cor. 14:26 What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and let one interpret; 28 but if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. 30 But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; 33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

God is not a God of Confusion but of Peace – Let's make this understandable and clear. In the church services, order must be kept. The service should be planned and properly arranged. There should be music, teaching, and explanation in the language of the people. If some one wants to preach the Word of God in a foreign language, there must be an interpreter. If there is no interpreter then they are to keep silent. Even at that, you should not have more than three speak in a foreign language even with interpreters. Why? Because God is not a God of confusion but of peace. When a visitor comes to the church with a testimony, let them speak as long as there is an interpreter.

1 Cor. 14:34 Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says. 35 And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. 36 Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only?

Women Keep Silent in the Churches – Women are not to speak in the assembly or church service. Paul's choice of the word "speak" would better be translated "preach" in today's language. The interesting part of this passage is the two questions that follow. "Was it from you that the word of God went forth? Or has it come to you only? For some reason some of the women were creating disturbance in the public worship by their dress (1 Cor. 11:2-16) and now by their speech. There is no doubt at all as to Paul's meaning here. In church the women are not allowed to preach. He calls it a shame. Certainly women still ought to be in subjection to their husbands. Some modern Christians have concluded that Paul's commands on this subject, even 1 Tim. 2:12, were meant for specific conditions that do not apply wholly now. However, women were to teach the other women and children. This is not a commandment for the Bible study time. This is a commandment for the preaching of the Word of God for the worship time. Why? Because the gospel was delivered to mankind through men, not women.

1 Cor. 14:³⁷If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. ³⁸But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized. ³⁹Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. ⁴⁰But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Argue if you wish with this command concerning women preaching in the worship time of the church, but it is the Lord's commandment. More than that, all things in the worship services are to be done properly and orderly.