

When You Use Your Spiritual Gifts
International Bible Lesson
1 Corinthians 14:12-26
Sunday, July 27, 2014
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“Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12—KJV).

“So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12—NRSV).

Paul wrote, “Love builds up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Love for God and others motivates Christians to seek spiritual gifts eagerly “for building up the church.” Christians strive to excel in spiritual gifts, and they know that using some spiritual gifts in their private devotions will build them up spiritually; however, using these same gifts in public worship might not build up the church. So, when Christians think about when to use some of their spiritual gifts in the church, they put love first and remember that “not all things build up” (1 Corinthians 10:23). For example, the Apostle Paul wrote that in the church he would rather speak five words with his mind to instruct others than ten thousand words in tongues that no one

could understand (1 Corinthians 14:19). Paul wrote that if someone said things in worship that others could not understand then he needed to pray for the wisdom to interpret what he said so others would be built up in church (1 Corinthians 14:13). When the church gathered for worship, Paul encouraged singing hymns, preaching the gospel, and teaching the lessons of Jesus. As Jesus foretold, the time had come for the true worshipers to “worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him;” therefore, Paul encouraged Christians to worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23). Jesus and Paul wanted believers to worship God in spirit and truth because they wanted believers to be adult in their thinking (1 Corinthians 14:20). Christians with mature thinking will “let all things be done for building up” (1 Corinthians 14:26). – L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. Why does Paul say Christians should be eager for spiritual gifts? What are we to strive to do with our gifts?

2. What did Paul say about how he would pray and praise God?

3. What can happen when someone does not understand what we say? What should we do when someone does not understand us?

4. What did Paul prefer to do in the church?

5. When Christians gather to worship God, what should they do according to Paul?

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