

PENINSULA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pursuit & Desire

What are some things you desire?

- Less traffic congestion, economic stability, reverse the aging process, world peace...
- Within the realm of realistic possibility

What are some things you desire that are obtainable?

- Eat a healthier diet, exercise more, meet some of your neighbors...
- Enough resource to provide for food, clothing & shelter

What are some things you desire enough to pursue?

- Because it can be **a big leap** from desire to pursuit
- With how much dedication are you willing to pursue something?

I Corinthians 12:1-30 reveals **many differing gifts**...

- Distributed by God to us all, **as He sees best**...
- And **necessary, interdependent** functions in Christ's body

12:31 Concludes... But earnestly **desire the greater gifts**. And yet I show you **a more excellent way**.

- **More excellent than what?** Any, or all of God's gifts & functions

Ch. 13:1-12 declares that anything **not** demonstrating love is **of no value**

- The compelling **attributes of genuine love** are clearly identified
- We can evaluate: **Am I, and are we** loving?

13:13 proclaims three **transcendent, eternal** attributes God offers us:

- And now abide **faith, hope, love**, these three; but **the greatest of these is love**.

Ch. 14:1 begins detailed instruction about the **use & value** of spiritual gifts.

- **Pursue** love, and **desire** spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
- Gifts are only valued when **expressed as love demonstrated**

To **pursue** means to "press forward"

To **desire** means to "have warm feelings for"

Our marriage relationship may have begun as simple desire

- Warm feelings for this other person

But those warm feelings heated up into pursuit

- **Love is worthy of pursuit**
- You **pressed forward** to establish the love relationship

Everything of **God with us** is personal & love based

- **Ch. 13:1-3**, Anything done without love is of **NO Value!**

Christ's Church is made of many, **necessary, interdependent** gifts & functions

- But **the more excellent way of love** gives everything its value

Love is worthy of Pursuit... and infinitely more valuable than desired gifts

- Gifts & functions will all pass away **(13:8)**
- **Love never will**
- **Everything** is evaluated by Love

Which is the **greatest** gift, and which is the **least**?

I Corinthians 14:1-40... within the definition of Love! (No chapter divisions)

Paul begins by contrasting the **most & least valuable** gifts,

- **What** they are used for, and **who** benefits by them

14:1-5, Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For he who speaks in a tongue **does not speak to men** but to God, **for no one understands him**; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. But **he who prophesies speaks edification** and **exhortation** and **comfort to men**. He who speaks in a tongue **edifies himself**, but he who prophesies **edifies the church**. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for **he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues**, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

We are **not told** to pursue spiritual gifts

- Yet many do... some from motives Paul will address
- Desire **what God alone** allocates

14:6-9, But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, **what shall I profit you** unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or

played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue **words easy to understand**, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

The Spirit of God is inspiring Paul to use common sense illustrations to make things plain.

14:10-12, There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, **let it be for the edification of the church** that you seek to excel.

14:13-15, Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but **my understanding is unfruitful**. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Some want to designate "pray with the spirit" as a separate prayer language, other than the gift of tongues Paul says needs to have understanding.

- That is making God's word fit their beliefs
- Rather than making our beliefs fit His word

14:16-19, Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but **the other is not edified**. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet **in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding**, that I may teach others also, **than ten thousand words in a tongue**.

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Teaching otherwise eliminates accountability for what is spoken in the body.

- **II Corinthians 5:10**, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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14:20-21, Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature. In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord.

- **Acts 2:5-13**, Some mocked and **said they were drunk**.

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14:22-23, Therefore tongues are **for a sign**, not to those who believe but **to unbelievers**; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and **all speak with tongues**, and there come in those who are **uninformed or unbelievers**, will they not say that **you are out of your mind**?

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14:24-25, But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is **convicted by all**. And thus **the secrets of his heart are revealed**; and so, falling down on his face, **he will worship God and report that God is truly among you**.

- *Conviction vs. Confusion*

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14:26-28, How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification**. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But **if there is no interpreter, let**

him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

- *Calling it a prayer language is not an exemption*

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14:29-33, Let two or three prophets speak, and **let the others judge**. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, **let the first keep silent**. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And **the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets**. For **God is not the author of confusion** but of peace, **as in all the churches** of the saints.

.....
Let two or three prophets speak, and **let the others judge**.

- *It's the responsibility of the body to bear witness*
- *For the sake of the body, and to encourage the speaker*

.....
But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, **let the first keep silent**.

- *God will often reveal the same word to more than one person*
- *We may offer an "Amen", or go and affirm them personally*

.....
And **the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets**.

- *When God reveals His word to someone, we have questions:*
- *Who is this for? Myself, someone else, or the whole body?*
- *When, where & how does God want me to express it? If at all.*
- *It may be so you can pray for whomever it applies to*

14:34-36, Let your **women keep silent in the churches**, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, **let them ask their own husbands at home**; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or **did the word of God come originally from you?** Or was it you only that it reached?

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Some cultural & heritage issues are involved here; logistics & history

- *It was common to have men & women seated on opposite sides of the room*
- *Shouting questions & answers back & forth didn't serve well*

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I Timothy 2:11-15, Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. **For Adam was formed first**, then Eve. And **Adam was not deceived**, but **the woman being deceived**, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

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*Adam was God's original creation, **fully vested with God's authority** on earth*

- *Eve was constructed, not created, out of what Adam already fully possessed*
- *She was complimentary to/with him, including gender, not independent of him*
- *She did not possess the authority needed to resist the enemy **on her own***
- *Her access to full authority was in & with him*

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As we've discussed, her primary sin was acting independently, in her own authority

- *Having sinned on her own, she then offered the temptation of sin to Adam*

- *He was now influenced by his love & devotion for her, not only to God*
- *Had she consulted with him first, it should have gone differently*

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Having grasped authority that should have been shared, judgement was incurred

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Genesis 3:16, To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

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Though he gave-in to her, and joined her in sinful rebellion against God...

- *He still retained primary authority on earth*
- *With men & women now both corrupt...*
- *They can still choose to share....*
- *Conflict lurks **in the shadows***

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In light of the predominant Corinthian worship of Aphrodite...

- *God's judgement on Eve was contrary to custom*

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14:37-38, If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

(ignores, or does not recognize, he will be ignored, or not recognized)

- *Contemporary customs & culture do not negate God's word*

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Strong, gifted women are not relegated to insignificant roles

- *Being submitted & under authority is entirely different from grasping for authority*
- *Without godly women serving in their full capacity, the church would suffer needlessly*

14:39-40, Therefore, brethren, **desire earnestly to prophesy**, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.

- ***Speaking God's Word** is the greatest gift & ministry*
- *Among the body, and in our culture*

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John 1:1-2, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

- *God reveals **Himself & His love** by His Word*

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Any gift or ministry without love is of **NO Value!**

- *All are given & used for **the benefit of the body***