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The Red and Black Safety Net

I Corinthians 14: 1-25 ¹Earnestly pursue love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. ²For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵I wish that all of you could speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be edified. ⁶Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷Even in the case of lifeless instruments, such as the flute or harp, how will anyone recognize the tune they are playing unless the notes are distinct? ⁸Again, if the trumpet sounds a muffled call, who will prepare for battle? ⁹So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. ¹⁰Assuredly, there are many different languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. ¹¹If, then, I do not know the meaning of someone's language, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. ¹²It is the same with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, strive to excel in gifts that build up the church. ¹³Therefore, the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵What then shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you speak a blessing in spirit, how can someone who is uninstructed say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷You may be giving thanks well enough, but the other one is not edified. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹But in the church, I would rather speak five coherent words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹It is written in the Law: "By strange tongues and foreign lips I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to Me, says the Lord." ²²Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for believers, not for unbelievers. ²³So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who are uninstructed or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴But if an unbeliever or uninstructed person comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convicted and called to account by all, ²⁵and the secrets of his heart will be made known. So he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is truly among you!" (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

A. How you do ministry is just as important as **what** you do! V. 1

B. It is more loving to speak **truth** to others than to exercise a gift that only benefits you. V. 2-6

C. Tongues without interpretation is very **divisive**. V. 7-12

- D. Praying and singing in the spirit has some **benefit**. V. 13-15
 - E. It is better to speak **prophetically** to others than to show off a gift that benefits no one. V. 16-18
 - F. Tongues are still a part of the Church **universal**, but it is a sign gift. In our maturity we must seek to teach others with God's **word**. V. 19-22
 - G. Corporate meetings should not include **tongues**, especially without interpretation. **Prophecy** should be the main vehicle to instruct and to evangelize. V. 23-25
- II. How can we apply these truths?
- A. **Examine** how you are coming across in trying to reach others. If you are not communicating love, it will come to **nothing**.
 - B. **Supernatural** experiences are still a part of our beliefs. They must pass the **standards** of love and biblical accuracy.
 - C. Speaking the truth in **love** has got to be our goal.
 - D. We must be willing to check our **hearts** in these matters. There may be **motives** in them that are not God honoring.