



Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 614–616.



## 1 Corinthians 14:37 – 40 (NKJV)

37 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.

38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.



Order - τάξις [taxis /tax·is/] n f. It is an arranging, arrangement; a fixed succession observing a fixed time. It is due or right order; orderly condition.

James Strong, [\*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon\*](#) (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995)



## Disorder Is Not The Order We Need

- Two statements in this section go together: “Let all things be done unto edifying” (*1 Cor. 14:26*), and “Let all things be done decently and in order” (*1 Cor. 14:40*).
- The Corinthian church had particular problems with disorder in their public meetings (*1 Cor. 11:17–23*).



## 1 Corinthians 11:17 – 23 (NKJV)

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.



22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;



## It Is Not About Only Pleasing Yourself, But Building Up One Another

- It is not difficult to determine: they were using their spiritual gifts to please themselves and not help their brethren.
- The keyword was not edification but exhibition.
- If you think that your contribution to the service is more important than your brother's contribution, then you will be impatient until he finishes, or you will interrupt him.



- Add to this problem the difficulties caused by some women in the assembly.
- First Corinthians 14:26 gives us a cameo picture of worship in the early church. Each member was invited to participate as the Lord directed.
- One would want to sing a psalm (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and another would be led to share a doctrine.





# We Must Have Order

- Someone might have a revelation that would be given in a tongue and then interpreted. Apart from some God-given order, there could never be edification.
- The tongues speakers were causing the most trouble, so Paul addressed them himself and gave several instructions for the church to obey in their public meetings.



**FIRST, Speaking,  
Interpreting And  
Judging  
(Evaluating The  
Message) Must Be  
Done In An Orderly  
Manner** *(1 Cor. 14:27–33)*

- There must not be more than three speakers at any one meeting, and each message must be interpreted and evaluated in order. If no interpreter was present, then the tongues speaker must keep silent.
- Paul's warnings to the Thessalonian congregation would apply here: "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good".



## 1 Thessalonians 5:19 – 21 (NKJV)

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

20 Do not despise prophecies.

21 Test all things; hold fast what is good.



## Why Were The Messages Evaluated?

- They were evaluated to determine whether the speaker had honestly communicated the Word of God through the Holy Spirit.
- It was possible for a speaker to imagine that God was speaking to and through him, but be under the control of his own emotions.
- It was even possible for Satan to counterfeit a prophetic message.



# Why Were The Messages Evaluated?

## 2 Corinthians 11:13 – 14 (NKJV)

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

- The listeners would test the message then by Old Testament scriptures, apostolic tradition, and the personal guidance of the Spirit (*"discerning of spirits," 1 Cor. 12:10*).



## 1 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV)

to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.



## Why Were The Messages Evaluated?

- If while a person is speaking, God gives a revelation to another person, the speaker must be silent while the new revelation is shared.
- If God is in charge, there can be no competition or contradiction in the messages.
- If the various speakers are "manufacturing" their messages, there will be confusion and contradiction.





- When the Holy Spirit is in charge, the various ministers will have self-control; for self-control is one fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:23*).

### Galatians 5:23 (NKJV)

gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- Our own self-control is evidence that the Spirit is indeed at work in the meeting.
- One of the ministries of the Spirit is to bring order out of chaos (*Gen. 1*). Confusion comes from Satan, not from God (*James 3:13–18*).



## James 3:13 – 18 (NKJV)

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.



- When the Spirit is leading, the participants can minister "one by one" so that the church may receive the total impact of God's message.
- For one thing, we must use the Word of God to test every message that we hear, asking the Spirit to guide us.
- There are false teachers in the world, and we must beware (*2 Peter 2; 1 John 4:1–6*).
- But even true teachers and preachers do not know everything and sometimes make mistakes (*1 Cor. 13:9, 12; James 3:1*).
- Each listener must evaluate the message and apply it to his own heart.



**SECOND, The  
Women In The  
Meeting Were  
Not To Speak**  
*(1 Cor. 14:34–35)*

**1 Corinthians 14:34 – 35 (NKJV)**

34 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.

35 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.



**SECOND, The  
Women In The  
Meeting Were  
Not To Speak**  
*(1 Cor. 14:34–35)*

- Paul had already permitted the women to pray and prophesy (*1 Cor. 11:5*).

**1 Corinthians 11:5 (NKJV)**

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.

- So, this instruction must apply to the immediate context of evaluating the prophetic messages.



- It would appear that the primary responsibility for doctrinal purity in the early church rested on the shoulders of the men, the elders in particular (*1 Tim. 2:11–12*).

### 1 Timothy 2:11 – 12 (NKJV)

11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.

12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.



- The context of this prohibition would indicate that some of the women in the assembly were creating problems by asking questions and perhaps even generating arguments.
- Paul reminded the married women to be submitted to their husbands and get their questions answered at home.
- (We assume that the unmarried women could counsel with the elders or with other men in their own families.) Sad to say, in too many Christian homes today, it is the wife who has to answer the questions for the husband because she is better taught in the Word.



- What "law" was Paul referring to in 1 Corinthians 14:34? Probably Genesis 3:16.

### Genesis 3:16 (NKJV)

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."

*(The word "law" was a synonym for the Old Testament Scriptures, especially the first five books.)*





**THIRD,**  
**Participants Must**  
**Beware Of "New**  
**Revelations" That**  
**Go Beyond The**  
**Word Of God**

*(1 Cor. 14:36–40)*

**1 Corinthians 14:36 – 40 (NKJV)**

36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?

37 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.

38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.



## Isaiah 8:20 (NKJV)

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

- The church had the Old Testament and the oral tradition given by the Apostles (*2 Tim. 2:2*), and this was the standard by which all revelations would be tested.
- We today have the completed Scriptures and the accumulated teachings of centuries of church history to help us discern the truth.



- In these verses, Paul answered the church member who might say, "We don't need Paul's help! The Spirit speaks to us. We have received new and wonderful revelations from God!"
- This is a dangerous attitude because it is the first step toward rejecting God's Word and accepting counterfeit revelations, including the doctrines of demons (*1 Tim. 4:1ff*).

## 1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,



- "The Word did not originate in your congregation!" Paul replied.
- One of the marks of a true prophet is his obedience to apostolic teaching. In this statement, Paul claimed that what he wrote was inspired Scripture, "the commandments of the Lord" (*1 Cor. 14:37*).
- First Corinthians 14:38 does not suggest that Paul wanted people to remain ignorant; otherwise, he would not have written this letter and answered their questions.



- The purpose of spiritual gifts is to improve the whole church, and therefore, gifts must be exercised in an orderly manner. Public worship must be carried on "in a seemly manner," that is, with beauty, order, spiritual motivation and content.
- Let's keep our priorities straight and major on winning the lost and building the church.

