

**Power Up**  
1 Corinthians 14:1-25

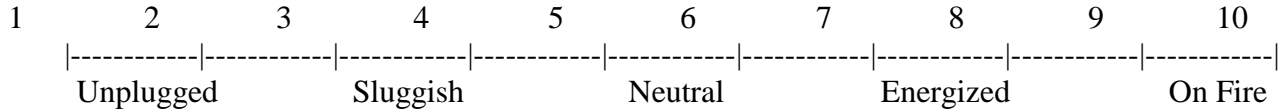
**Opening Icebreaker Question:**

- What is the most powerful tool you own or like to use?

**OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING:** We just finished a series working through the book of Acts. We saw that God is on an unstoppable mission, bringing people to life through the good news of Jesus, and he wants to do that in our day and in our community. And yet it seems impossible! How are my neighbors ever going to soften their hearts to the things of God? Some of you even wonder how your own spouse or children could ever possibly experience the new life that Jesus gives. Many of you are longing and trying to live the life that you were created for, without being plugged into a power source that will make it possible. With that reality in mind, we drop back into 1 Corinthians. We've been in a message series called "Organic." We're looking at what Paul says about our life together as followers of Jesus in his first letter to the church in Corinth, a bustling port city in the Roman Empire. We previously saw Paul talking about how we form this one living organism, and the Spirit of God gives us gifts to carry out his work. Last week Lou looked at one of the most famous chapters in all the Bible, known as the "Love Chapter," where Paul makes this poetic diversion from his train of thought to say, "It doesn't matter how great your giftedness is, if you're operating without love for one another, it doesn't amount to anything."

This week in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul discusses two qualifiers as he encourages us to eagerly seek the gifts of the Spirit. **But first, let's look at our current state of spiritual empowerment:**

1. On a scale from 1-10 (10 being high), how connected do you feel to the Holy Spirit's power? Mark on your own below first before discussing it.



2. What is it that keeps us from asking the Holy Spirit to fill us? What keeps us from asking him for the spiritual gifts that he wants to pour out on us? Discuss.
3. Paul has already talked about the Holy Spirit in Ch. 12 using the language of drinking. He said that God has given all of us the "same Spirit to drink." *For those of you who have experienced strong infillings of the Spirit, how is being filled with the Spirit like taking a drink of a liquid?*
4. He says in his letter to the Ephesians [brackets indicate paraphrase of the Greek], "Don't get drunk with wine but [continue repeatedly being] filled with the Holy Spirit." *How would this idea of repeatedly requesting the filling of the Holy Spirit (like drinking water several times a day) inform you about the process of being filled? Discuss.*

**Pastor Josh states that there are two qualifiers to eagerly seeking the gifts of the Spirit. READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-12.**

4. What is the first qualifier (v. 12)? What general principle about seeking spiritual gifts does Paul state?
5. What does being selfish or self-focused with our spiritual gifts look like?

6. Is there anything you (or we as the church) do that causes other believers to feel like outsiders? How can we fix this?

**READ 1 Corinthians 14:13-25**

7. First, from this passage, what is the gift of tongues? How would you describe it?
8. From this passage, why is it best that tongues is expressed privately (or possibly in small settings)?
9. From this passage, why is the gift of tongues a good thing?
10. Next, from this passage, how would you describe the gift of prophecy (or do any of you remember how Pastor Josh described it in his sermon)?
11. Per this passage, why is prophecy to be desired over the gift of tongues?
12. What boundaries/limitations might we put on the gift of prophecy? (Josh gave the following parameters: 1) It is for strengthening, encouraging, and comfort; 2) If from God, it will not ever contradict Scripture; 3) It must be tested in the community of believers).
13. What might it look like to eagerly seek the gift of prophecy, especially in your small group?
14. In v. 23-25, what is Paul's underlying motive with regard to "inquirers," or seekers?
- a. V. 22 seems to contradict Paul's point that tongues is not a gift to be practiced where seekers might be present. How is this gift a "sign" for unbelievers? Gordon Fee answers well:

*The solution...lies primarily in the recognition that Paul's point in the paragraph is made in vv. 23-25 and especially in the way v. 23 fulfills the Isaiah passage. This means that, contrary to many interpretations, this text (v. 22) needs to be understood in light of what follows, not the other way around.... In the public gathering uninterpreted tongues function as a sign for unbelievers. What kind of sign? In light of v. 21, for which this is the inferential deduction, "sign" in this first sentence can only function in a negative way. That is, it is a sign that functions to the disadvantage of unbelievers, not to their advantage. Most likely Paul is using the word in a way that is quite in keeping with his Judaic background, where 'sign' functions as an expression of God's attitude; something 'signifies' to Israel either his disapproval or pleasure. In this case, it is his disapproval that is in view; but not in the sense that God intends unbelievers during this time of grace to receive his judgment. To the contrary, tongues function that way as the result of their effect on the unbeliever, as the illustration in v. 23 will clarify. Because tongues are unintelligible, unbelievers receive no revelation from God; they cannot thereby be brought to faith. Thus by their response of seeing the word of the Spirit as madness, they are destined for divine judgment—just as in the OT passage Paul has quoted. This, of course, is not the divine intent for such people; hence Paul's urgency is that the Corinthians cease thinking like children and stop the public use of tongues, since it serves to drive the unbeliever away rather than to lead him or her to faith.*

15. Is there anything you (or we as the church) do that causes church visitors to feel like outsiders or be uncomfortable? How can we fix this?
16. **Share and Pray:** Among your prayer requests, pray for the Holy Spirit to pour out the gifts that best help the church grow and serve the world at large. Spend some time "waiting" on the Spirit, to see how he might answer your prayers.