

## LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

### Part 9: The Gift of Tongues

#### SCRIPTURE READING — 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

Last week we began to talk about the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

*“Any ability that is given by and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be used in any ministry of the church to be used in any ministry of the church, inside the four walls and outside the four walls.”<sup>1</sup>*

Last week we looked specifically at the gift of prophecy in the New Testament.

*“The gift of prophecy is the human reporting of divine revelation. Speaking forth in merely human words something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”<sup>2</sup>*

One of the crucial things we learned last week is that the gift of prophecy in the New Testament is never to be confused with the office of the prophet in the Old Testament.

*Old Testament prophets spoke **the very words of God** — the words they spoke will last forever because they are the very Words of God.*

The very subject of the gifts of the Holy Spirit can have a polarizing effect on Christians. Sadly, Christianity is split into camps based upon

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1994), 1016.

<sup>2</sup> Sam Storms, *The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts* (Ventura, Ca: Regal, 2012), 110.

different views on the gifts: Cessationist camp and the Charismatic camp. Sadly, there are even divisions within the Charismatic group over their understanding and experience of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of tongues is **the most** polarizing gift among all the gifts of the Spirit. Of all the gifts of the Spirit, believers seem to struggle most with tongues! Believers are very rarely indifferent about this gift. In some church cultures tongues is a gift that is overemphasized — a gift people are obsessed with. While in other church culture it is despised and those who desire it or exercise it are ostracized. Listen to this man's story —

*I was raised in a tradition that viewed speaking in tongues as barely a notch above snake handling. Ignorant and undignified people spoke in tongues, probably with eyes rolled back in their sockets while on the verge of something akin to an epileptic seizure— or so I was led to believe. People who could read and write and hoped to make their mark in the world, on the other hand, wouldn't be caught dead muttering that sort of gibberish or associating with those who did. Or so I was led to believe.*

Christians don't respond that way to the gifts of healing or the gift of miracles.

God the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to dedicate an entire chapter in the New Testament to the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues. That's because these gifts are "lightning rod gifts" within the church. They've been that within the church since the time Paul had to first write about them nearly 2,000 years ago. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write

an entire chapter on them because these two gifts have been and still are the most misused and abused gifts in the church. As I said a few moments ago they are either over emphasized or despised; obsessed over — or ostracized.

Unlike any of the other gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues are easily faked and easily counterfeited. It's simply crucial for us to be informed and directed by the Word of God concerning these two gifts.

PLEASE LISTEN TO ME — The gift of tongues is not something that we would ever divide over, not within Metro, not among ourselves, and not with other churches. We can never look at another church, other churches, or other individuals that have a different view of the gift of tongues and say, "We can't have fellowship with you," or, "We're better than you."

We can hold the subject of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit in an open hand. We can differ on these things; debate these things, but we will not divide over these things. Regardless of how we might differ on those things, we are united by our agreement on the identity of Jesus (He is God who became man). We are united by our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ; His perfect life, His sacrificial death, and His bodily resurrection from the dead — and we are united by our faith in His coming to rule and reign. **Those truths** we hold in a closed hand — non-negotiable — never to be surrendered. They are

essential for salvation! And they are big enough to keep us united when we might disagree on open-handed issues.

Like I said a few minutes ago, it's not uncommon for the gift of tongues to be met by fear and anxiety. To be afraid of, or anxious about, the gift of tongues is ultimately on the way we view of our heavenly Father. We can always trust our heavenly Father when it comes to His gifts —

because He has given to us the ultimate gift of His Son when we were yet His enemies. Scripture is always true — and it says we should earnestly desire spiritual gifts; it portrays this gift in a beautiful way.

Earlier I made the point that the Holy Spirit dedicates an entire chapter in the New Testament to the gifts of prophecy and tongues. But I say this to those who are obsessed with the gift of tongues. We don't want to find ourselves obsessing over that one gift because the Scriptures don't!

Jesus only mentioned the gift of tongues once ([Mark 16:17](#))! In the list of spiritual gifts enumerated in [1 Corinthians 12](#), tongues is the very last of those listed other than the gift of interpretation ([1 Corinthians 12:8-10](#)). In the sequential list given towards the end of Chapter 12 tongues is the very last gift mentioned — the very unspectacular gift of helps and the very unspectacular gift of administration are listed before it ([1 Corinthians 12:28](#)). In the [Book of Acts](#) (which covers **30** years of church history), there's only **3** mentions of the gift of tongues. In the entire collection of New Testament epistles only **1** of them mentions the gift of tongues. It is the Book of 1 Corinthians — and then only in **3** chapters.

Metro — there are **260** chapters in the New Testament. So we can say with absolute certainty that the gift of tongues is good and wonderful and beautiful; but to be obsessed with the gift of tongues would be inconsistent with the weight it is given in the New Testament.

**Let's start with a definition** of the gift of tongues.

**D.A. Carson**, in his book titled *Showing the Spirit: An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14*, sights Larry Christiansen — *Most contemporary charismatics would be happy with the definition of "tongues" offered by Christensen: "a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, whereby the believer speaks forth in a language he has never learned, and which he does not understand."*<sup>3</sup>

**Sam Storms** — *The gift of tongues is simply the Spirit-energized ability to pray, worship, give thanks or speak in a language other than your own or one you might have learned....*<sup>4</sup>

Look at **Acts 2:4 NLT**

*And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.*

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<sup>3</sup> Carson, D. A. (1996-08-01). *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians, 12-14*

<sup>4</sup> *Storms, Sam (2013-03-18). The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts (p. 151). Gospel Light. Kindle Edition.*

This is very **not** normal. This is **not** a natural thing. It is a supernatural thing given to us by the Holy Spirit. The **ESV** reads it as

*And **they** ....**began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.***

**Dave Guzik** — adds this thought in regards to language: *Language is an agreement between parties, where it is agreed that certain sounds represent certain objects or ideas. When the Holy Spirit enables a person to speak in tongues, God understands what we are praying.*

In **1 Corinthians 4:14** Paul says —

***NLT** — For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.*

So the gift of tongues is the Holy Spirit enabling the spirit of a person to pray to God, or praise God, in a way that **bypasses** the mind and **isn't comprehended** by the one functioning in the gift.

**QUESTION** — Why would we ever need to bypass the intellect — bypass human understanding? This, by the way, is very stumbling for a lot of people, because it is very humbling. The answer to the question gives us an insight of how beautiful and wonderful this gift is and what an expression of God's grace this gift is!

Has anyone ever experienced a time when there was a burden in your soul to pray something, or desire to worship in a way that you couldn't articulate? Has anyone ever experienced a time when it was even more

than a matter of not having the right words — you simply didn't even know how to pray or what to pray for in that moment?

**Romans 8:26-27** scratches at this —

*<sup>26</sup>And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. <sup>27</sup>And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.*

Some debate as to whether or not this passage is referring to tongues as a prayer language. But it speaks strongly to the point that there are times in life where we want to communicate to God but it's beyond our words or it's beyond our mental capacity to do so. Simply put — we need help!

HERE'S THE POINT — There are times when we **need** to talk to God to get help about really big stuff — but we need help to ask Him for help. This is what the gift of tongues is all about — *the Spirit enabling the spirit of a man or woman to pray, worship and give thanks in a language other than your own.*

**There is a very important distinction** that Paul makes concerning the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues. In the gift of tongues **man** is communicating with God. In the gift of prophecy **God** is communicating with man. This is made clear in **1 Corinthians 14 (NLT)**.

**<sup>1</sup>Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. <sup>2</sup>For if you have the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious.**

The gift of tongues is man speaking to God as enabled by the Spirit. Prophecy is directed to man from God as revealed by the Spirit. Tongues **go up** to God **from** man as he is enabled by the Holy Spirit. Prophecy **comes down** from God to man as revealed by the Spirit.

That tongues is directed to God is also seen in **1 Corinthians 14:15-17** where we are told that tongues involves prayer, praise, singing, and the giving of thanks. All of that is God-ward. Tongues is not a horizontal gift; man speaking to men, nor is it a downward gift; God speaking to men.

In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit fell upon the church and they all began to speak in tongues. The gift of tongues was the first gift given to the church. There were two components in that supernatural event: <sup>1</sup>. The disciples were enabled by the Spirit to speak in a language they didn't know or understand. <sup>2</sup>. The multitudes heard them speak, not just in their own language, but in the unique dialects of their language (dialectos). They said that the disciples were declaring the wonderful works of God! Exalting God for who He is and what He has done.

DON'T MISS THIS — The crowd was arrested by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. God got their attention — a door was opened for the



Gospel and Peter took advantage of it and preached the Gospel. But he did it in the language everybody knew in that day, Greek. So the gift of tongues isn't used to proclaim the message of the Gospel — the Gospel is proclaimed by common language. Neither is tongues used for prophecy. Hence the distinction between tongues and prophecy.

### **Definition — Distinction — and now a Delineation.**

The gift of prophecy strengthens others — strengthens the church. The gift of tongues strengthens only the individual exercising the gift.

**<sup>3</sup>But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. <sup>4</sup>A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church. <sup>5</sup>I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.**

There's a caveat — a provision — by which the church can be strengthened. We'll get to that in a moment.

**<sup>6</sup>Dear brothers and sisters, if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language, how would that help you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. <sup>7</sup>Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. <sup>8</sup>And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle? <sup>9</sup>It's the same for you. If you**

speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space. <sup>10</sup>There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning. <sup>11</sup>But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me. <sup>12</sup>And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

With the exception of the gift of tongues, spiritual gifts are given for the building up of the whole body — they enable us to serve one another.

***1 Peter 4:10** As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:*

Tongues stands alone in that it is for the strengthening, edification and benefit of the one who is exercising the gift. That makes it absolutely unique.

**Back to the caveat** — It is only when an utterance in tongues is interpreted that others are built up.

<sup>13</sup>**So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said.** <sup>14</sup>**For if I pray in tongues,**

So tongues is a prayer language

**my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.**

Tongues is outside of the scope of my intellect. I don't understand what I'm saying (that's at the heart of the definition of this gift).

**<sup>15</sup> Well then, what shall I do? I will pray in the spirit, and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit,**

Tongues involves singing.

**and I will also sing in words I understand. <sup>16</sup>For if you praise God only in the spirit,**

Tongues involves praise.

**how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? <sup>17</sup>You will be giving thanks very well,**

Tongues involves thanksgiving

**but it won't strengthen the people who hear you.**

Fallen culture — especially western culture — is radically individualistic. It is radically narcissistic. That's because it consists of individuals who live in and live for their little *"Kingdoms of One."* God has redeemed and rescued us out of our little *Kingdoms of One*. He puts us into His church. As unique and diverse as each of us are — Jesus calls us calls to be one. We are one body under the headship of Jesus Christ.

**QUOTE: Britt Merrick** — *The church, properly understood, challenges the deepest core of who we are as western individuals.*

**HERE'S THE PROBLEM** — The individualism of fallen culture has very subtly and very powerfully influenced the way we see the church and the way we "do" church! People come to church and their over riding concern is "How did it go for me?" — "How was I blessed?" — "What did I get out of being there?" — "Did I enjoy it?" That has nothing to do with the mind of Christ! Jesus never intended for the redeemed to think of church in that way. The redeemed gather to exalt and enjoy Jesus together; to be built up together. It's a community thing that involves mutual responsibility. So when we gather the over riding concern is always for the whole. How does everybody get built up?

The gift of tongues is for the individual — **unless** there is an interpretation. Only then can it build up the whole.

**QUESTION** — **What should this look like?** When there is a gathering of the church and somebody speaks out in tongues in a way that is meant to be heard (as opposed to quietly praying to yourself) — that would be a public use of the gift of tongues.

Paul is very clear on the exercise of tongues in **that way** and in **that setting**. We'll see that in that context there would be an interpretation.

As we've seen the gift of tongues defined, differentiated and delineated we can have some very definite expectations of what the interpretation of that utterance in tongues would involve. It would involve prayer, praise, exalting God (perhaps in song), and giving thanks.

Without an interpretation only the person speaking in tongues would be edified. But the interpretation of that utterance would result in mutual

edification. Everyone would say, *"That is so awesome, God **is** that good — God **is** worthy of that praise,"* and everyone would be built up, just as we're built up by the words of a song that speaks of who God is and what He's done.

We would expect that the interpretation would **never** be directed to the church. So if somebody spoke in tongues in a way to be heard we should all be thinking, "There should be an interpretation now — either that same person or someone else. We should all be praying for the interpretation. And if someone should say that the interpretation is that the Lord is going to heal someone — that **would not** be an interpretation of that utterance in tongues. Hopefully it would be prophecy. But that wouldn't be the interpretation of tongues because tongues is always directed to God, not to people. It's not a revelation; it's an exaltation of God. It's prayer, praise or singing, or giving thanks.

Confusing tongues with prophecy is a very common error in charismatic churches.

**Definition — Distinction — Delineation — and now a Demarcation.**

Tongues is primarily to be used as a private prayer language and should be minimized in the broad public church gathering such as this.

Paul sets up this demarcation beginning in **verse 18**

**<sup>18</sup>I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you.**

**<sup>19</sup>But**

This is one of the most important words in the Bible. It sets up contrast between what has preceded and what is going to follow.

**<sup>19</sup>But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.**

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul uses hyperbole to make a point: He loved and appreciated the gift of tongues as a tool for private prayer and praise — speaking in tongues should be downplayed; not forbidden — but downplayed when the church gathered.

Why down play tongues in the church and play up intelligible language?

**1.** Because the goal of the church gathering is for Jesus to be glorified and for all to be edified. Those 5 words that the whole congregation can understand result in the common good, mutual edification — making those 5 words better than 10,000 words in an unknown language.

**2.** If unbelievers are present they will think we're crazy and they will feel alienated.

**<sup>20</sup>Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind. <sup>21</sup>It is written in the Scripture**

He is going to quote from Isaiah 28

**“I will speak to my own people through strange languages and through the lips of foreigners. But even then, they will not listen to me,” says the LORD.**

Follow his argument here —

**<sup>22</sup>So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for the benefit of believers, not unbelievers. <sup>23</sup>Even so, if unbelievers or people who don’t understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. <sup>24</sup>But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don’t understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. <sup>25</sup>As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, “God is truly here among you.”**

He says that tongues is a sign for unbelievers — but what is it a sign of? That experience for them is going to cause them to feel alienated and separate from the gathering of God's people.

It’s not hard for us to connect with this. Have you ever been around people who speak English but also speak another language and they begin to speak in that other language that you don’t understand? That is a sign — “You are not welcome!” You can hang with it for a bit but after a few minutes you feel like you’re not wanted and you don’t belong. Just like Paul said earlier ([verse 11](#))— *I’m a foreigner to you and you’re a foreigner to me*. In essence Paul is saying that we are childish

when we gather and say, "Let's just all speak in tongues" — and in that we are telling the unbeliever they don't have any place in the gathering of God's people.

The church gathered should **always** want those who are not yet believers to come in and by God's grace feel like they **could** belong — **want** to belong because they see the love that the church gathered has for Jesus and for each other — how they look for ways to benefit each other and build each other up.

By contrast Paul says that prophecy (via the pulpit / via a prophetic word) will reveal the secrets of their hearts.

**Demarcation** — Paul is exalting the use of tongues for private prayer and praise! He says that the person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally and because of that he desired that they could all speak in tongues. But Paul very clearly **downplays** speaking in tongues in the public church gathering because **edification and evangelization demand intelligible content**. Tongues by themselves cannot provide that. So in the corporate setting Paul valued knowable communication and common language that instructed and strengthened others far above tongues.

<sup>26</sup>**Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.**



DON'T MISS THIS — To direct the church gathered into mutual edification and evangelization, Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, limits the use of tongues in the public gathering.

**<sup>27</sup>No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They must speak one at a time, and someone must interpret what they say.**

**<sup>28</sup>But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.**

FIRST — he puts limits on it. ***No more than two or three should speak in tongues***

SECOND — There can't be a bunch of people speaking in tongues at the same time. Only one can speak in tongues at a time.

THIRD — If someone is going to speak in tongues there must be an interpretation.

Again — Paul is saying this shouldn't happen that often. But he does say that we are **not to forbid it** (verse 39). Paul had to say that in verse 39 because there were those in the church in Corinth who felt like this business of tongues it was too complicated, too messy and they would have just done away with the gift when the church had a public gathering.

REMEMBER — We do not form theology from bad examples or bad experiences. What Paul is saying in this chapter is the basis of our theology. **1 Corinthians 14** is orthodoxy. Right Theology is the basis for right practice. Orthodoxy is the basis for orthopraxis.

We have the saying, *"Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater."* Paul takes it a step further and says, *"Don't throw out the baby with the bath water — but by all means do throw out the bath water."* The *"baby"* that we don't want to throw out is the gift of tongues. The bath water that needs to be thrown out is the practice of speaking in tongues all at the same time — more than two or three — without any interpretation. Just as we learned in our overview of spiritual gifts last week — the remedy for the abuse or the misuse of the gifts is not "stop the gifts!" The remedy is, "Let's do them better, let's do them right."

That's exactly his instructions to them in the closing verses of the chapter

**1 Corinthians 14:39-40 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues. <sup>40</sup>But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.**

Order in the exercise of prophecy and tongues is possible because the gifts are subject to the one who moving in them.

*Verse 32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.*

We can choose to speak out in tongues or not. It's not as if the Holy Spirit comes upon you and takes control of your tongue and you just start speaking in tongues. That's not the way it works.

HERE'S THE PONT — I can pray in tongues at will and I can stop at will

When you're with a group of Christians, and it's not a public gathering, and there are no unbelievers present — You can speak in tongues,

praise in tongues or use your prayer language. At that time, in that setting, no interpretation is necessary. There wasn't an interpretation in [Acts 10](#), in the house of Cornelius. There wasn't an interpretation in [Acts 19](#) when the Ephesian believers began to speak in tongues after the Holy Spirit fell upon them. If it's not the public gathering of the church it doesn't require an interpretation.

We need to be discerning in the exercise of the gift. We might not want to pray in tongues over a new believer because they probably don't know a thing about 1 Corinthians 14. It's probably just going to freak them out and that's not what they need.

By contrast — we can pray in tongues over a mature believer because they know that the Holy Spirit is praying through me, interceding on their behalf.

**Back to the issue of interpretation.**

**[13 So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said."](#)**

If we're waiting on the Lord, worshipping the Lord, and you believe that you're to stand up and give an utterance in tongues you should first pray for the interpretation. If you can't interpret and you do not know if there is someone here who has that gift — here's what Paul says we're supposed to do

**[28 But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.](#)**

The key for us here is our intent. If you intend for it to be public you say it in a way that everybody could hear.

If it's just between you and God you say it in a volume that might be overheard by others but it's obvious to them that it's not intended for them. That is exercising your prayer language — you are *speaking to God in tongues privately*. Speaking is verbalization.

**WHAT IS IT LIKE TO RECEIVE THE GIFT?** By the enabling of the Holy Spirit there is in your spirit a new sense of praise and thanksgiving and prayer that you don't have thoughts or words for — and suddenly there comes into your mind syllables — sounds waiting to be verbalized. That's how language works. In that sense, tongues works just like human language.

*Acts 2:4 And they ....began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The Holy Spirit communicated to them an utterance — syllables and sounds to be spoken — but they had to speak them.

### **ARE TONGUES FOR EVERY BELIEVER?**

The short answer is — *NO*.

Back in **1 Corinthians 12:30** Paul asks a rhetorical question, *"Not all speak in tongues, do they?"* The answer is no, everybody doesn't speak in tongues.

In **1 Corinthians 14:5** Paul reiterates that not every believer speaks in tongues. *"I wish you could all speak in tongues."* The fact that he wished everyone could speak in tongues meant that not everyone does.

Remember — **1 Corinthians 12:11** Paul told us that *"The Spirit alone decides which gifts each person should have."* We don't all have the same gifts. So it's not given to every believer.

**QUOTE: Wayne Grudem** — *"Since it is a gift Paul views as edifying and useful in prayer and worship on a personal level even if not in church — It would not be surprising if the Holy Spirit gave a very widespread distribution of this gift and many Christians in fact received it."*

I believe that the Holy Spirit wants more of us to have the gift of prophecy, I also believe that the Holy Spirit wants to enable more of us to pray in tongues.

## **ARE TONGUES THE EVIDENCE OF BEING BAPTIZED WITH THE SPIRIT?**

Some of our charismatic brothers and sisters, and some of our Pentecostal brothers and sisters teach that if you get baptized in the Holy Spirit you will **always** speak in tongues.

I lovingly and humbly disagree because I don't see how scripture bears that out (Acts 10 and 19 versus 8).

That position can do two things: <sup>1.</sup> Place pressure on people to fake the gift or <sup>2.</sup> Cause them to doubt a legitimate experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit because they didn't speak in tongues.

We must take great care to be faithful to what scripture says. I don't see the scriptures saying that the gift of tongues is for every believer, or that it's the necessary evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

**THIS IS SO HUGE** — Speaking in tongues isn't the mark of maturity. Speaking in tongues isn't the proof that you're super spiritual. The gifts are given on the basis of grace, not merit. The gift of tongues is not the proof that you're special to God or loved by God. God could not love you any more than He loves in Christ.

The great passion of the Holy Spirit is not that we would merely have gifts. It is His desire that we would have fruit.

*Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control*

**THE** greatest evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our lives is our love for one another. The man or woman filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit are the ones exuding the love of Christ.

**Gifts are the tools. The fruit is the goal.**

*1 Corinthians 13:1 If I speak with the tongues of men and angels but do not have love I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*

**QUOTE: D. A. Carson** — "When Paul says *I have become* it means that my action of speaking in tongues without love has left a permanent affect on me that has diminished my value and transformed me into something I should not be."

The last place we want to end up is stuck in the tool box without any fruit.

**RESPOND** — How do we respond to all that we've learned about the gift of tongues? We should respond by telling our heavenly Father that we want everything that He has for us — nothing more — nothing less and nothing else.

**How do you receive the gift of tongues?** It's like everything else — You ask your Heavenly Father for it, trusting that He can give it. That means that you trust Him even if He doesn't give it to you — you trust Him so much that you won't go away condemned or sad.

If you don't receive the gift of tongues right here and now — don't go away condemned or sad. Your heavenly Father knows what's best for you at this moment in your life. That doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't ask repeatedly. God loves persistence in prayer.