



Empowering People to Change the World

**Power & Gifts of the Holy Spirit:
Speaking in Tongues:
Kingdom Principles, Practices, & Kinds**

Steve Holt

Speaking in Tongues: Kingdom Principles, Practices, & Kinds

Ex. I was saved in a dispensational and reformed group of students, where I never knew anyone in my group of friends who spoke in tongues. But my father was a leading pastor in the charismatic movement in the Lutheran Church.

So, I had two different things going on in my personal journey—one was skepticism based on ignorance, and the other was respect based on my dad's experience.

- But as a missionary in Japan, I began to long for more intimacy with the Holy Spirit, and while in Okinawa, God came upon me in the shower and I began to speak in tongues.
- Praying in tongues is a very important part of my life today!

Introduction:

- Paul arrived in this booming, rowdy port city upon leaving Athens, where he'd had a somewhat rocky reception by the Greek thinkers at the Areopagus. It was about 60 miles from Athens to Corinth.
- Corinth had a reputation for loose morals. In fact, the Greeks had invented a word to describe living an immoral life—"Corinthianize."
- So, these were men and women just coming out of immorality and idolatry
- There was a lot of confusion happening in Corinth. It was a melting pot of different ethnic and racial groups. Jews and Gentiles were attempting to worship and pray together.

The Biggest Problem in Corinth: Disunity & Chaos!

- The Corinthian church was split among various factions, seemingly between Paul, Apollos, Cephas (or Peter), and Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:10–17; 3:1–9). Allegiance to these factions was causing internal fighting within the church.

- Another source of disunity came in how some members of the Corinthian church seemed to elevate certain spiritual gifts (especially speaking in tongues) over other gifts (1 Corinthians 12–14).

This is why 1 Corinthians 12 is about unity in the use of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:12

“¹² For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

And 1 Corinthians 13 is all about love!

Listen, there are people who do not want you to hear about or grow in spiritual gifts. They say the gifts of the Spirit are not for today.

But Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “*Your faith should not rest in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God*” (1 Corinthians 2:5)

God Wants Us to be Alive in the Spirit, Rooted in Scripture, Guided by Love, and Unified as the Body of Christ!

Satan hates it. God loves it!

Healthy Perspective to Speaking in Tongues... (not the weird stuff we've experienced; manipulation and hype is not from the Spirit)

6 Kingdom Principles and Practices for Speaking in Tongues (1 Corinthians 14)

1 Corinthians 14

Vs. 1

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”

1) Pursue Love in the Use of All Spiritual Gifts.

The very first thing, the most important Kingdom Principle, is that when speaking of spiritual gifts, we Always Pursue Love!

Read all of 1 Corinthians 13

Vs. 2

“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...¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

2) Speaking in Tongues is Speaking to God from your Spirit.

The prophetic is about edifying the church by speaking to men. But speaking in tongues is a heavenly language spoken to God. It is an unknown language, because no one understands it. It is from one's spirit to the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37-39: *heart*, the real translation should be *abdomen*, *in our heart or spirit to God*.

But listen, when the gift of tongues happens in a church setting with an interpreter, then it does edify the whole church.

- There are unknown tongues that even the speaker doesn't understand.
- And that means the tongue is not understood by anyone.
- Some have called this a “heavenly language.”
- The Holy Spirit comes through our human spirit, but your mind is unfruitful. The more analytical, the harder this is. Because you think everything must flow through your mind, the analytical and intellectual. But tongues work through the unconscious.
- JR Polemus says, “*It's like you've got a new satellite dish from your spirit to God's Spirit.*”

Vs. 3

“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

3) Speaking in Tongues is for Self-Edification.

- This is your personal intimate relationship with God. In my message last week, I spoke about the value of the prophetic gift, and the purpose of the gift was edification of the whole church.
- But in the case of speaking in tongues, the main purpose is to build up and edify the person speaking in tongues.
- Jude 1:20

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,”

Vs. 13-17

“¹³ Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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? ¹⁷ For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.”

4) In a Church Gathering, Understanding of Truth is Vital.

Vs. 22-28

“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. ²³ 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? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ 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...²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, let

there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God..."

5) In a Church Gathering, There Must Be an Interpreter of Tongues.

- In gathering of believers, the purpose of tongues is to speak to non-believers through an interpreter of the tongue.
- If there is no interpretation, it is of no use. In other words, there must be time given for an interpretation. If none is given, we don't receive it.
- The point is that everything is to be done for mutual edification, not confusion in the church

Vs. 33

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints...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."

6) All Should Be Done in an Orderly, Peaceful Manner.

- There was obviously confusion happening in Corinth with the disorderly use of spiritual gifts, and it appears that the two gifts that were the most misunderstood and misused were the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues.
- Paul is saying very clearly that everything should be done in an orderly way.

1 Corinthians 12:28 "...varieties (or diversities) of tongues."

4 Different Kinds of Tongues

Two are Public, and Two are Private

1) Speaking in Tongues (Known Tongue) in a Church Gathering

Acts 2

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language... ¹¹—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”

- It was supernatural. Galileans were speaking in the languages of these other nations. In other words, these were people who had not learned a language but spoke fluently, attracting the attention of native speakers.
- It was a reversal of the Tower of Babel. Instead of God giving languages that confused the people, God was giving languages that unified the world.

2) Speaking in Tongues (Unknown Tongue) in a Church Gathering with an Interpreter

Vs. 27

“If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.”

- Unknown tongue needs an interpreter.

- This is a prophetic utterance. God's speaking in a tongue with an interpreter to prophesy something. It is for the body of Christ and/or for someone in the church.

3) Speaking in Tongues in Worship

Vs. 15 “...I will sing with the spirit.”

4) Speaking in Tongues in Prayer and Intercession

Vs. 3

“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴ He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

Vs. 14

“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.”

Romans 8:26-27

“Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

- Paul is saying he doesn't know what he's praying about, but he would ask God for understanding as we talked about earlier.

In Conclusion: **Mark 16:15**

“And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”