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Gifts From the Father

Introduction

We tend to forget that everything that we receive comes from our Heavenly Father. The Scriptures tell us this very clearly.

Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. (James 1:17 NASB)

We have, however, developed an attitude that makes it hard to believe that our Heavenly Father really wants to give us gifts. We want to make it so that we have to earn gifts from our Father. It is a lot easier for us to believe that we receive from our works rather than from the grace of our Father. Jesus clearly revealed the desire of our Father.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11 NASB)

This also makes it clear that we don't earn gifts but simply ask Him for them. As James tells us "...You do not have because you do not ask." [James 4:2] Many times we don't ask because we don't know that a gift is available.

The Primary Gift

The primary gift of foremost importance is that God has given Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. The Lord emptied Himself and took on the form of a man. [Philippians 2:5-8] This was done so that His body, prepared for His purpose, could be offered as a sacrifice, the perfect lamb.

Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;" (Hebrews 10:5 NASB)

Jesus explains the meaning when, at Passover, He instigates what we call the Lord's supper, which we continue to do to honor Him and remember His sacrifice.

And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, **"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."** (Luke 22:19 NASB)

By giving us Jesus, the Father made a propitiation for our sins so that we might be restored to Him.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 2:17 NASB)

and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those* of the whole world. (1 John 2:2 NASB)

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the

world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9-10 NASB)

The gift of Jesus can be received by anyone in the world who is willing to repent, turn from sin, and believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NASB)

But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:22 NASB)

Jesus is the gift available to everyone. He is the primary gift. However, the Father's other gifts are only available to those who have received Jesus, who have become part of the Family of God.

The Promise of the Father

After Jesus' death and resurrection but before He ascended He appeared to His disciples on several occasions and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God. He also told them to wait for the promise of the Father.

Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5 NASB)

Jesus said that they had heard Him speak of the promise of the Father previously. John records His words to them.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17 NASB)

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. (John 16:7 NASB)

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. (John 16:12-15 NASB)

Luke identifies the promise of the Father with a gift of the Father that is available for the asking.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13 NASB)

After Pentecost, the gift of the Holy Spirit is available to all believers as Peter said to those who asked what they should do after hearing his powerful words about Jesus after the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:38-39 NASB)

So, the two great gifts from our Heavenly Father to us are Jesus first and then the Holy Spirit. Jesus so that we might be restored to the household of faith and know the Father and the Holy Spirit so that we might know the fullness of all that the Father has for us.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, (1 Corinthians 2:12 NASB)

Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit

As with most things of the Lord, we have made receiving the Holy Spirit more difficult than necessary. The basic approach is simply to ask for the Holy Spirit. If we do that the Father will give us the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13 NASB

(13) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

It is simple—ask the Father, because the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father. Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit [Mark 1:8; John 1:33]. Just as a believer baptizes a new convert in water, Jesus baptizes a believer in the Holy Spirit. In the first case, water is the element into which you are immersed; in the second case, the Holy Spirit is the element into which you are immersed.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, gave us the procedural steps necessary for us to move into the fullness of what God has for us. Jesus had told Peter that He was giving him the keys to the kingdom [Matthew 16:19] and Pentecost was the first occasion for Peter to present the keys.

Acts 2:38 NASB

(38) Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter gave three keys, three procedural steps: 1) repent, 2) be baptized, and 3) you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. You have to have completed the first two steps before going to the third. That is why the verb tense on the third is future—it occurs after the first two. Most of us have been told that we get it all when we receive Jesus. That is not true according to Peter. We have to use all three keys.

Peter went on to extend the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, to all of them and to all of their children and then to all that the Lord would call to Himself.

Acts 2:39 NASB

(39) "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

This extends the promise of the Holy Spirit across time and space. It extends it even to us. If God has called you to Himself, then the promise is to you.

Let us look at the examples in the scriptures of the various instances of people receiving the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost

As we saw in our earlier scriptures, the Lord told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father and that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to witness. On the day of Pentecost they were together in an upper room and the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of Jesus' promise. This is the first instance of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 NASB

- (1) When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
- (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- (3) And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
- (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

As we look at these instances of receiving the Holy Spirit we need to also look at the manifestations mentioned as the Holy Spirit came.

1. Tongues of fire upon each head
2. They began to speak with other tongues

House of Cornelius

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews that had come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost observance. The gentiles were not included. The Lord took several steps to arrange for the gentiles to also receive the Holy Spirit. This occurred at the house of Cornelius where Peter spoke to them as directed by the Lord.

Acts 10:44-48 NASB

- (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.
- (45) All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

- (46) For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,
- (47) "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"
- (48) And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

It was an astounding thing to the Jews that gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit [Acts 11:15-18]. It just didn't fit into their traditional theology. However, the manifestations that they saw was conclusive proof that the gentiles received the Holy Spirit just like they did. There are two manifestations listed:

1. They were speaking with tongues
2. They were exalting God.

This was conclusive enough that Peter said that they could be baptized in water as real believers in the Lord Jesus.

These two instances, Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, are instances where the Holy Spirit came as a sovereign act of God. Both of these instances were important because they were “firsts”—Pentecost for the Jews and Cornelius's house for the gentiles.

Samaria

The clearest example of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (being filled with the Spirit) as a separate experience from salvation is the story of the people of Samaria. Philip went to Samaria to preach Christ. The people saw and heard the signs that he performed. People were delivered from demons and many lame and paralyzed were healed. As a result of all of this the Samaritans believed Philip concerning Jesus.

Acts 8:12 NASB

- (12) But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

After believing Philip about Jesus and the Kingdom of God, they were baptized. In other words, they became Christians. They did exactly what people do today—they believed and were baptized. But that is not the end of the story.

Acts 8:14-18 NASB

- (14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,
- (15) who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
- (16) For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

- (17) Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.
- (18) Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had new believers, they sent Peter and John to minister to them. They laid hands on the believers and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. They had become believers and had been baptized (we would say that they had been “born again”) but they had not received the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures don't give the details about the type of manifestations that occurred but we know that something visible happened because Simon the magician saw it and wanted to buy from the apostles the power to give the Holy Spirit. This must have been something that Simon had never seen before and he had seen the miracles, healings, and deliverances performed by Philip previously.

Disciples at Ephesus

On this occasion Paul went to Ephesus and found 12 disciples. His first question reveals how important he thought receiving the Holy Spirit was if you were a believer.

Acts 19:1-6 NASB

- (1) It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.
- (2) He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."
- (4) Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."
- (5) When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

After further questioning, Paul found out that they weren't full believers. They were disciples of John the Baptist. Paul told them of Jesus and when they believed, he baptized them in water. Once they were full-fledged believers, he laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit was accompanied by two manifestations.

1. Speaking with tongues
2. Prophesying

Apostle Paul

During Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him to go into the city and he

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would be told what to do. For three days Paul waited without eating or drinking. The Lord also told Ananias to go to Paul and pray for him to regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:17 NASB

(17) So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1 Corinthians 14:18 NASB

(18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

Notice that it was not an apostle that laid hands on Saul (Paul) to receive the Holy Spirit but only a certain disciple named Ananias. While no detail is given of Paul's experience of being filled with the Spirit, Paul later told the Corinthians that he spoke with tongues more than they did. Based on our previous scriptures, it is logical to assume that Paul spoke in tongues when he received the Holy Spirit.

Let's recap these five occasions in a table so that we can compare the manifestations of receiving the Holy Spirit.

<i>Occasion</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Manifestation</i>
Pentecost	Acts 2:1-4	Tongues of Fire Speaking in Tongues
House of Cornelius	Acts 10:44-48	Speaking in Tongues Exalting God
Samaria	Acts 8:12-18	Not specified but visible to others
Disciples at Ephesus	Acts 19:1-6	Speaking in Tongues Prophesying
Apostle Paul	Acts 9:17; I Cor. 14:18	Speaking in Tongues

In four of these five instances the initial manifestation or evidence of the Holy Spirit included speaking in tongues. On the fifth occasion the evidence is not specified but it was visible to others. Based on the other four occasions, it is logical to conclude that the visible evidence that enticed Simon the magician to offer money was speaking in tongues.

Can a person be baptized with the Holy Spirit and not speak in tongues? Of course he can. However, anyone filled with the Holy Spirit can speak in tongues if they will only do so. The Holy Spirit does not "possess" us or force us to do anything. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in faith in order to

speak in tongues.

If one does not speak in tongues, there is always an element of doubt that the Enemy plays on to say that we have not received since tongues is one of the primary scriptural evidences of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. If we don't utilize tongues, we eliminate from our experience a powerful prayer resource that has specific purposes in the pursuit of our calling in the plans of God.

Steps to Receiving

1. Ask the Father for Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask in faith, we receive Jesus by faith, we receive the Holy Spirit by faith, we receive tongues by faith.
3. Open your heart and receive what the Lord is giving until you are full to overflowing.
4. Open your mouth and begin to speak, glorifying God in your natural language and in the language which the Holy Spirit gives.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Jesus told us that part of the Holy Spirit's job was to teach us the things of the Lord. This included the things that the disciples were not ready to hear yet.

"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. (John 16:12-13 NASB)

Paul gives us the practical application of Jesus' words.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, (1 Corinthians 2:12 NASB)

For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10 NASB)

Part of the manner in which the Holy Spirit works is through the gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. These should be particularly active as we gather together to worship the Lord and to minister one to another.

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7 NASB)

According to this, each one of us is expected to receive and function within a gift or manifestation of the Holy Spirit and each of us is expected to operate these gifts for the common good of the other believers. Paul then lists for us the nine primary gifts of the Holy Spirit.

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10 NASB)

These nine gifts can be divided into three groups:

Supernatural knowledge gifts

1. word of wisdom
2. word of knowledge
3. discerning of spirits

Power gifts

1. gift of faith
2. gifts of healing
3. working of miracles

Verbal gifts

1. prophecy
2. tongues
3. interpretation of tongues

Paul then tells us that the Holy Spirit distributes His gifts individually to each one of us according to the will of the Holy Spirit.

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:11 NASB)

If we have received the Holy Spirit then we have no excuse for not operating in the gifts of the Spirit. The Scriptures that we just read tell us that each one of us has been given at least one gift of the Spirit and that this gift was given to us for the good of others.

Paul even tells us that we should “*earnestly desire the greater gifts*” [I Cor. 12:31].

Tongues—Purpose and Use

Speaking in Tongues versus Gift of Tongues

As we have seen in the previously, speaking in tongues is the initial evidence or manifestation of receiving the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that if you don't speak in tongues that you haven't received the Holy Spirit? Not necessarily. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and doesn't force anyone to do anything. We have to co-operate with Him. Some refuse to yield their mouth and tongue to the Holy Spirit either through fear or ignorance and consequently don't speak in tongues. However, because speaking in tongues appears to be the initial evidence, the enemy can cause you to doubt the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit if you don't speak with tongues. Anyone who receives the Holy Spirit

and refuses to speak in tongues is missing a blessing and a powerful prayer tool. Anyone seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be expecting to receive tongues also.

When looking at all of the scriptures that relate to speaking in tongues it becomes apparent that the “speaking in tongues” received at the time of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is different from the “gift of tongues” as used in the Church. To clarify our understanding many teachers have distinguished between these by labeling the tongues received with the Holy Spirit as “prayer tongues” or “a prayer language”. This is constructed terminology that is not used in the Scriptures but does provide an easy way to differentiate between the two uses of tongues. I will use the same terminology in presenting the rest of this lesson.

To understand the difference we have to look at the way each is used. Their use reveals their function. In these next verses, Paul is contrasting “speaking in tongues” with “prophesy”.

1 Corinthians 14:1-6 NASB

- (1) Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy.
- (2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.
- (3) But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.
- (4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.
- (5) Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but *even* more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.
- (6) But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?

Lets put the verses that deal with process of speaking in tongues together so that we can easily see what is being said about it:

- (2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries.
- 4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

These verses reveal several important facts about speaking in tongues:

1. If you speak in tongues you are speaking directly to God, because people don't understand what is being said.
2. Your spirit is speaking, not your mind or understanding.
3. Your spirit is speaking mysteries which are not known to you in the natural.
4. When speaking in tongues you are edifying (building up or charging up like a battery)

yourself.

This is contrasted with prophecy which speaks to men and is understood and builds up (edifies) the Church. Paul goes on to say that if you speak in tongues in the assembly it doesn't edify the Church unless it is interpreted. Without interpretation speaking in tongues in the assembly is not profitable.

Since speaking in tongues is your spirit communicating directly with God, then it must be some form of "spiritual language". The fact that it needs to be interpreted within the assembly also reinforces the concept of a language. This is underscored by Paul when he said, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels ..." (I Cor. 13:1). When the Holy Spirit provides a language for you, He has all of the languages of men and of angels from which to choose.

We see then that in the list of the gifts of the Spirit in I Corinthians 12:6-10, the "gift of tongues" goes together with the "gift of interpretation". Therefore, when in the assembly, it is the gift of tongues which operates because it must be followed by the gift of interpretation.

The goal is to edify the Church and not ourselves, so Paul says that if we speak in tongues we should pray to interpret. (If interpretation is required then he is speaking in Church.)

Paul again says that when you pray in tongues your spirit is praying but your mind doesn't understand what is being prayed by your spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:12-17 NASB

- (12) So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek to abound for the edification of the church.
- (13) Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.
- (14) For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.
- (15) What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.
- (16) Otherwise if you bless in the spirit *only*, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?
- (17) For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.

Paul summarizes the results in verse 15: I will pray with the spirit (in tongues) and I will pray with my mind (understanding) also; I will sing with the spirit (in tongues) and I will sing with the mind (understanding) also. We should do both: pray or sing in our "spiritual language" and pray or sing in our natural language.

Paul goes on to say that if you say a blessing or give thanks using tongues, the one who has not received the Holy Spirit will not know when to say "amen" because he doesn't know what is being said. Therefore, even though you are giving thanks well enough in tongues, you should pray with understanding for the benefit of the ones with you.

We see then that speaking in tongues in the assembly is the operation of the gift of tongues because of the interpretation requirement; however, in the instances of receiving the Holy Spirit that we looked at in our previous lessons, there appeared to be no interpretation involved, which implies that the use of tongues in those instances was different from the use of tongues in the assembly.

Paul said that in the Church he desired to speak a few words with his mind (understanding) so that others might learn rather than many words in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 NASB

- (18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;
- (19) however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

However, he also said that he spoke with tongues more than all of the Corinthians. Since he was trying to correct their overuse of tongues, he must have spoken in tongues a lot. Yet, he didn't do it in Church. So, when did he do all of his speaking in tongues? It must have been when he was alone in his prayers. This enforces the idea that the “tongues” received with the Holy Spirit is primarily for prayer and not the “gift of tongues” for use in the assembly.

Not everyone has the “gift of tongues” even though everyone baptized with the Holy Spirit should have a prayer language. The fact that not all have the “gift of tongues” is made clear in these verses.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 NASB

- (28) And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, *various* kinds of tongues.
- (29) All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not *workers of* miracles, are they?
- (30) All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?
- (31) But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

It is obvious from the questions that Paul is speaking about the Church or ministry within the assembly and from that we see that not all would have the “gift of tongues” just like all do not have the “gift of interpretation” or gifts of healings. However, as we saw in previous lessons, all who received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues, i.e., their prayer language.

The scriptures list what should be expected when the believers assemble together. There should be every member involvement and there should be a diversity of activities.

1 Corinthians 14:26-29 NASB

- (26) What is *the outcome* then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

- (27) If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it should be* by two or at the most three, and *each* in turn, and one must interpret;
- (28) but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God.

However, the use of the gift of tongues is limited to, at most, three messages and each must be done in order and interpreted. If the first is not interpreted then he should be quiet as it was not the “gift of tongues” that he spoke but simply his “prayer language” for use between him and God.

Because of the possibility of abuse, many assemblies don't allow speaking in tongues; however, this is in direct contradiction to Paul's statement to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 14:39 NASB

- (39) Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

The Purpose of Tongues

The primary purpose of tongues is individual not corporate. The “gift of tongues” is not to be used corporately unless there is also the “gift of interpretation” active within the assembly. But, privately, speaking or praying in tongues has great benefit; otherwise, why would Paul say that he spoke in tongues more than the Corinthians?

Some advantages to tongues:

1. **Our spirit is praying.** This bypasses our mind so that any carnal or natural interest is avoided. We are praying perfectly for what we exactly need according to the plan and purpose of God.
2. **We are praying directly to God.** There is not question about to whom our prayers are directed. Men do not understand our prayers in the spirit.
3. **We are praying correctly.** We are being helped by the Holy Spirit.
4. **We are speaking mysteries.** We are speaking to God about things that we don't know in the natural.
5. **We are building ourselves up.** The word for edify means “to charge up” like you would charge up a battery. Jude tells us that our faith is built up also [Jude 1:20].

The Prophetic Typology

There is also an important aspect involved with the purpose of speaking in tongues that goes all of the way back to the tower of Babel. The story is told in Genesis chapter 11. Up to that time, the whole earth spoke the same language. They joined in a purpose that was contrary to the purpose of God and as a consequence, God confused their language and, I believe, split the continents as part of their judgment.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings with it a unity of the Spirit that did not exist previously and which we are to diligently strive to preserve or maintain [Ephesians 4:3]. The Holy Spirit also brings to us a new unity of language, a spiritual language provided by Him with which we are to use to communicate with God as an additional to our natural language.

This is a direct reversal of the judgment at the tower of Babel. God brings forth a unity of purpose by the Spirit and provides the communication language necessary to walk in that purpose.

Use of Tongues

As we have seen, the primary use of tongues is as a supplement to our individual prayers. Praying with tongues does not replace praying in our natural language, it only adds to or acts as an accessory to our normal prayers. This is particularly helpful when you do not know how to pray about a specific matter. You can pray in tongues trusting the Holy Spirit to cause you to pray a correct prayer that is fully in line with God's will.

While praying in tongues adds a new dimension to your prayer life, it doesn't make you "super spiritual". You receive the Holy Spirit and you receive tongues by faith. There is absolutely no merit or achievement involved. It is not a "reward" that God gives the faithful. There is no "worthiness" on our part. We need to keep all of this in the proper perspective.

The bottom line, the goal, is to produce love in us. The mark of the spirituality mature is the fruit of love not the gifts or works of power. It can't be said any clearer than Paul said it the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 13:1 NASB

- (1) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Using any gifts of the Spirit, including speaking in tongues, without operating in love causes us to be just an unpleasant noise maker.

The Gifts of Jesus

As we saw at the beginning of this study all perfect gifts come down from the Father of lights; however, the Father has also made Jesus and the Holy Spirit administrators of various categories of His gifts.

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Ephesians 4:7-8 NASB)

When Jesus ascended to the Father, He gave gifts to men. These are detailed in the Scriptures.

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, (Ephesians 4:11 NASB)

These are not gifts of *things or titles*. They are gifts of *people* to the whole Body of Christ. The Father

first gave us the person of Jesus, then the person of the Holy Spirit and, now, through Them He has given us men who function as apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. They have a specific job to do among the people of God.

for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; [\(Ephesians 4:12 NASB\)](#)

They are to equip the saints and they are to build up the body of Christ. They are to continue to do this for a specified time period.

until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. [\(Ephesians 4:13 NASB\)](#)

This time period is “until”:

1. we all attain to the unity of the faith;
2. we all attain to the knowledge of the Son of God;
3. we all attain to a mature man;
4. we all attain to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

It can easily be seen that the time period of the “until” is still ongoing for we certainly have not attained to all of these things. That means that the gifts given by Jesus on His ascension of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers are still valid and ongoing gifts for today.

The Father does not give useless gifts. Each gift has value, function and purpose. We short ourselves if we do not receive what the Father has given.

The Father has given us Jesus and through Him, the Holy Spirit. Jesus has given us apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. The Holy Spirit has given us the nine gifts of the Spirit.

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another *various* kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. [\(1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NASB\)](#)

In all of these gifts we see different types and varieties; but, in all of these the Father is working all things in various ways in all people for His own purposes.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons.* [\(1 Corinthians 12:4-6 NASB\)](#)

Let us not neglect the gifts of the Father. Let us receive all that He desires to give.