

Section 9: The Gifts of the Spirit

The recommended reading for this lesson is Spiritual Gifts for a Dynamic Church, by George Shalm. Also, Two Sides of a Coin, by Charles and Frances Hunter is informative. A Handbook on Tongues, Interpretation, and Prophecy, by Don Basham is excellent reading. Chapters twelve through fourteen of I Corinthians should be studied in detail.

I. The Purpose of this study and General Comments

A. To dispel ignorance (I Corinthians 12:1).

1. The Old Testament records that God's people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)
2. Entire congregations have been wrecked due to ignorance of the gifts of the Spirit. Many of those involved with the Charismatic movement have been harmed by the lack of proper teaching. Although individuals may begin with a sincere hunger for the ways of God, without proper guidance chaos prevails. Present day churches are the benefactors of the Corinthian Church's mistakes. Had there not been abuse and misuse of the gifts of the Spirit in the early Church, perhaps there would not have been a need for the guidelines that were set forth in the Corinthian letter. An assembly may make mistakes even today, but those mistakes can be turned into educational opportunities.
3. Usually, those groups without a strong pastor suffer the most from ignorance. There are individuals who gather together

for worship to God, but confusion is present. Statements such as “we don’t need a pastor – we have the gifts of the Spirit” are products of ignorance. The absence of strong leadership in the Corinthian church led to many of the problems that the church encountered. It is obvious from Paul’s statement in I Corinthians 11:34, “... and the rest will I set in order when I come”,¹⁰³ that things were out of order in the assembly. One can only speculate as to the reason for leadership problems in the Corinthian church. The church might have been without a pastor due to sickness, death, resignation, etc.

B. Purpose of the Gifts

1. To aid and to assist, not to bring confusion and strife.
2. Nor are the gifts to take the place of the ministry, or to be above the Bible.
3. Signs and gifts are to follow the believers, not believers chasing the signs (Mark 16:17).

C. Who can be used in a gift?

1. God is free to choose any instrument or vessel He desires.
2. An individual should not be filled with pride should God choose them for a particular function. Remember, God even spoke through a donkey (Numbers 22:28)! And He could have had the rocks praising Him (Luke 19:40). No one is used of God because they are worthy. Our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

Admittedly, God usually speaks through His people. However, the message is preeminent over the messenger. One should not become so pre-occupied with the worthiness or unworthiness of the messenger that God's message is forgotten.

D. What is the best Gift?

1. The best gift is determined by the prevailing circumstances. Example: when praying for the sick, the gift of healing would probably supersede the gift of tongues in importance, for that occasion, while the gift of wisdom might be preferred in a counseling situation.

E. Differing views concerning possession of the gifts.

1. One view holds that an individual believer possesses a particular gift. The belief being that the gift is resident within a believer at all times. Statements as "he has the gift of healing" or "she has the gift of discernment" are uttered by supporters of that belief.
2. Another view contends the gifts are available to the body of Christ (believers). And God chooses whenever and whomever He desires to be used in a particular gift and at a particular time. God may operate through different people in an assembly. Or He may use the same person almost all of the time, in a certain gift. The use of an individual may depend on available vessels becoming yielded vessels. God alone has the knowledge of how a person can be used without causing destruction to an individual.

There are some

individuals who would become so lifted up with pride if God used them, that it would destroy them.

The above view contends that God is not limited to operate just through a person who claims to possess a gift but can move whenever and through whomever He desires.

The operation of a certain gift is not contingent upon who is in the congregation who possesses the gift, but upon a need being present. And that depends on whether that need could be met by a particular gift. All God needs under those circumstances is a need and a yielded vessel. This can happen in the local congregation, thus eliminating the need to "hop" from church to church, because one feels they have to follow the individuals who possess the gift they need. The author holds to the latter view, that the gifts are for the body of Christ and subject to God's disbursement. There is no legitimate reason why an individual cannot be blessed and healed by God at their home church, that is guided by a Holy Ghost filled pastor. This can occur just as easily as chasing every Tom, Dick, and Harry who comes to town with a tent revival, advertising their particular gift.

II. I Corinthians Chapter 12 Explained

A. Comments on verses one through seven. The verses from I Corinthians chapter twelve will be commented on. The verses being explained will appear in parenthesis.

1. (1) Ignorance of God's Word is not bliss. On the contrary, people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). There is a definite need to study the subject, according to the apostle.

2. (2-3) Man cannot depend on his own ability to find truth and hope. The Spirit of God is required for the needs of any congregation to be met. If there are those who feel there is no need for the gifts of the Spirit, let history be a lesson. History teaches that man's wisdom led him into idolatry, while God's Spirit will magnify Jesus Christ. The essentiality of the Holy Ghost is revealed, for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord without it!

3. (4-7) There are different gifts and various purposes, but under the direction of one Spirit. The gifts are given to aid and that individuals may be helped and profited.

B. Definitions of the Gifts

I Corinthians 12:1

The word 'gift' in the original is not in the first verse of chapter twelve as the King James Version has it.

"The words may as well be translated concerning spiritual persons, as spiritual gifts..."¹⁰⁴

However, no violence is done by the translators inserting the word 'gift'. It is only for clarification. But verse

four does contain the word “gift”. Although the original does not state it in verse one, it is implied. The root word for gift used here is charisma.

“...charisma...a gift of grace, a gift involving grace (charis) on the part of God as the donor...”¹⁰⁵

Note: The giver (God) should be lifted up and given honour, not the gift or vessel used (people). For example, if someone gives you \$1,000.00, you don't pin flowers on yourself or the money, but you give honour to the giver. Gifts are for the Church.

Individual Gifts:

1. WISDOM

The gift of wisdom is best expressed by quoting James 3:13-18.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”¹⁰⁶

It is not a self-esteemed wisdom, but a yielding to and dependence upon God for wisdom from above. It is an attitude of prayer to God for wisdom on how to use the knowledge we have. It is not what we have, but how we use it.

2. KNOWLEDGE

The root 'Gnosis'

“...denotes, in the New Testament, knowledge, especially of spiritual truth...of God's knowledge.”¹⁰⁷

3. FAITH

Faith is more than just a strong emotional feeling one receives while being prayed for.

It is

“...primarily, firm persuasion, a conviction upon hearing...is used in the New Testament, always of faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.”¹⁰⁸

Blessed is the man who can instill faith in God's people. It is a faith that is inseparable from trust, assurance, belief, etc.

NOTE: updated July 3, 2021, from an article by Rev. Carl Varnell that appeared in a United Pentecostal Foreign Mission publication called Global Witness, October - December 1993. A portion of the article follows on the next page.

4. HEALING

It is noted that the scripture says, "gifts of healing". There is more than one type of healing. There is physical healing and spiritual healing. Normally one thinks of the physical aspect of healing when talking of the gifts of the Spirit. But God would want us to know that this gift is also a healing balm for the soul. A form of the word for healing is used

Global Witness

FAITH: The Finished Work of Faith Promise



by **Carl Varnell**
Pacific Regional Field
Supervisor
Chairman, Faith
Promise Committee

Faith is the most important thing in the life of a Christian. The Bible tells us that we are saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8), justified by faith (Romans 5:1), and sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18). The just shall live by faith (Galatians 3:14), and we go from faith to faith (Romans 1:17). Faith is our shield (Ephesians 6:16); it is the victory that overcomes the world (I John 5:4); and we stand by faith (II Corinthians 1:24), and we are kept by faith (I Timothy 4:7). Faith is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:9) and one of the nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). A measure of faith is given to every man (Romans 12:3), yet faith may be increased through use (Luke 17:5). Our faith may be tried through trials (James 1:3, I Peter 2:7), but the Christian is to hold fast to faith (Hebrews 10:23) and to be strong in faith (Romans 4:20). Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

With the importance given to this subject in the Scriptures, it is astonishing how little many Christians use their faith. Faith Promise giving provides an

avenue for Christians to put faith to work. As faith works to provide finance for missions, it also encourages the use of faith in other ways that often result in miracles and revival.

Faith is the most important aspect of a Faith Promise. Faith is necessary since the one making the Faith Promise commitment does not have the full amount of needed funds at the time the promise is made. Faith Promise giving begins with a commitment to God to be involved in the Great Commission. This commitment is evidenced by a desire to pray and give financially to send missionaries to the nations of the world. The commitment is fulfilled by wise stewardship, sacrifice, and faith in God to supply the needed funds.

Stewardship is the foundation, sacrifice is the framework, and faith is the finished work of Faith Promise. Building upon the foundation of stewardship, the donor moves into the realm of sacrifice as a joyful expression of thanksgiving to God. The final dimension of Faith Promise giving takes the donor beyond human ability to give and requires the exercise of faith in God's ability to supply.

If after prayer and wise stewardship, all the Faith Promise funds are not immediately available, the donor should honor the commitment of stewardship and sacrifice while continuing to ask God to supply the additional funds committed by faith.

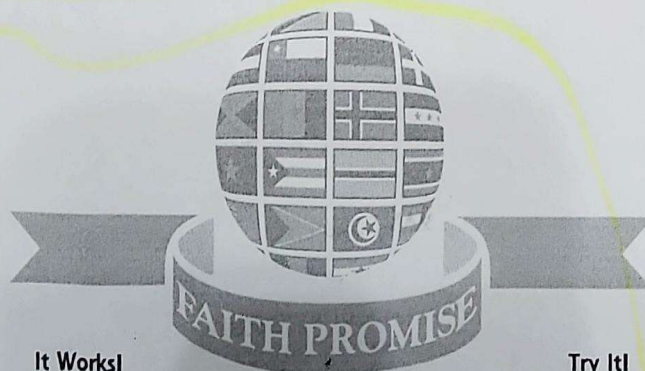
Madagascar, Continued from page 1. through Thursday, consisting of classes of practical applications of pastoring, bookkeeping, pastoral duties, ministerial ethics, theology, and holiness. The program covers over forty hours of classroom study.

To stay in this program, the pastoral student must find a place to work as a pastor or an evangelist. They leave the Bible school on Friday and go to their places of labor, then return on Monday. After they finish their class work, they go to their places of labor to be fulltime until graduation in September. This year we have twenty-one students in the second year program. All are pastors or evangelists, and they have started nine new churches.

The students' day begins with morning prayer before their 8:00 a.m. class. In the morning they have classes and chapel. In the chapel service they lead the worship, and on most days one of them preaches. After lunch, which their wives prepare, they may have another class, and most of them must work on the maintenance of the Bible school grounds and cutting fire wood. In the afternoon they will also go out as evangelistic teams to witness and help in area churches.

By the time the students complete the two-year course, they have gained spiritually, mentally, and physically. They are well prepared to do the work of God as He leads.

We thank God for the Ladies Auxiliary Bible school student support program and for all of our Partners in Missions with Madagascar. We appreciate the financial help and prayers so that we can operate this great Bible school. God bless each of you. Your gifts of money are being used to spread the gospel in this nation.



It Works!

Try It!

“...figuratively of spiritual healing (Matthew 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:27, Hebrews 12:13, I Peter 2:24, possibly James; 5:16 includes both...”¹⁰⁹

5. MIRACLES (works of power)

From “Dynamic” It is

“...power, inherent ability, is used of works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means.”¹¹⁰

It can pertain to miracles of a moral and a physical nature.

6. PROPHECY

Prophecy is more than just telling of the future. It is also proclaiming at the present time.

“’Propheteia’...signifies the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God...though much of Old Testament was purely predictive, see Micah 5:2, e.g., and John 2:51, prophecy is not necessarily, not even primarily, foretelling. It is the declaration of which cannot be known by natural means (Matthew 26:68), it is the forthtelling of the will of God, whether with reference to the past, the present, or the future, see Genesis 20:7, Deuteronomy 18:18, Revelation 19:11, 11:3...”¹¹¹

The gift of prophecy is better understood by understanding the role of the prophet himself.

“...the purpose of their ministry was to edify; to comfort, and to encourage the believers, I Corinthians 14:3, while its effect upon unbelievers was to show that the secrets of a man’s heart are known to God, to convict of sin, and to constrain to worship, vv. 24, 25.”¹¹²

Yes, the man of God must not only speak of the future, but he must feed the flock of God with relative truth. God's people need to know how to live today, not just ten years in the future.

7. DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

The root for Spirit ('pneuma') denotes several things. Such words as wind, breath, character, man, etc. are used. It also denotes

“...purpose, aim, II Corinthians 12:18, Philippians 1:27, Ephesians 4:23, Revelations 19: 10, Ezra 1:5, Psalms 78:8”¹³

With the gift of discernment, the purpose or motive of an individual can be determined. Peter discerned Simon the Sorcerer's motive in Acts 8:18-20. Some would think it noble of Simon to desire power so that others could receive the Holy Ghost. But why did he want this power? Was it really a desire to see men filled with God's Spirit, or was it so that Simon could make money? Peter discerned the latter. The gift of discernment of spirits is needed today also. For instance, why do men give large sums of money to the church? Is it out of love for the work of God, or so they can have a voice in the church? The word 'discerning' also adds to the above comments:

“'Diakrisis'... a distinguishing, a clear discrimination, discerning, judging, is translated 'discerning' in I Corinthians 12:10, of discerning spirits, judging by evidence whether they are evil or of God.”¹⁴

The wise man must be able to judge between good and evil.

8. KINDS OF TONGUES

The word used for tongues has several different meanings. However, the context reveals that this is

“...the supernatural gift of speaking in another language without its having been learned.”¹¹⁵

9. INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

"In I Corinthians 12:30 and 14:5, 13, 27, it is used with reference to the temporary gift of tongues in the churches; this gift was inferior in character to that of prophesying, unless he who spoke in a 'tongue' interpreted his words..."¹¹⁶

C. Comments on verses eleven to thirty-one

1. (11-13) Emphasis again on the unity involved with the operation of the Spirit.

Although there are different gifts, different people with diverse backgrounds, they are all brought together under the umbrella of one Spirit.

2. (14-27) The allegory of the human body to the operation of the Spirit. Importance of working together is expounded. It is not big "I " and little "you", but everyone has a purpose and a function. There should not be arguments of who is most important. Due to God's calling, individuals will perform in different positions. But that is not to say one is more important to God than another. A church

must work in harmony. Some spiritual bodies have spiritual diseases that affect them similar to the effect of sickness on the physical body. There are conditions that will not allow some individuals to function properly because various members of the body cannot function with other members. This condition prevents some from walking. In the same way a church's progress is hindered when spiritual diseases are present in the body. God's way is harmony, and respect is shown to each member. Each is important in their role and has a specific purpose.

3. (28) God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers, after that miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.¹¹⁷

To those who feel the gifts of the Spirit eliminate the need of ministers, this verse should be read. God is responsible for the calling and placing of ministers in various fields of labour. And just as God gave gifts to the church, He gave ministers to the church! It is interesting that those responsible for enlightening God's flock with the Word are listed ahead of governments and gifts. Governments and gifts are never meant to replace the minister, but to aid in the ministry of the WORD. It should also be noted that God ordained helps and governments. There are some who view organization and programs as evil. Yet, the scriptures teach that God set government in the

church. Some are opposed to any form of church government, church organizations, Sunday School programs, literature, etc. They contend these are all man-made programs. But in reality, they are only helps and governments that God has set in the church. It is as the example given in Acts chapter six. The apostles realized the need for more helps and governments (business Acts 6:3). Therefore, the disciples delegated this responsibility to other men. Just as any form of help and government should do, the seven men aided the apostles. They were not appointed to replace, instruct, or rule over the apostles, but to assist. Programs, contrary to what some believe, do not bind the ministry, but assist . him in fulfilling God's calling.

4. (29-31) Exhortation to covet the best gift. Of course, the best gift for a particular situation depends on the circumstances involved. Also, the writer of Corinthians alludes to the fact that the gifts of the Spirit are not the highest calling, or what the believer should seek for night and day. But the writer points the reader to a better way - LOVE. Not that the gifts were to be excluded, but simply understood in the list of priorities.

III. I Corinthians chapter thirteen examined

A. Why study this chapter?

1. The apostle apparently felt it was needed to squeeze this topic right in the middle of his discussion of the gifts.

If the inspired apostle chose this course of action, who are we to alter that outline?

2. It is interesting that Paul also placed the love section prior to his explanation of the more vocal gifts, the gifts that usually receive the most attention. It was as though Paul was stressing the point: having gifts without love is in vain.
3. Not only is this chapter studied to show the importance of love, but to explain those scriptures properly that are misinterpreted by some. There are groups which try to twist the scriptures in such a way as to give the appearance that the gifts of the Spirit are no longer for the church today.

B. I Corinthians chapter thirteen explained

1. (1-3) Regardless of the natural abilities, and the gifts of the spirit that an individual may be used: it is all in vain without LOVE. Good works and contributions to various charities are wonderful. But if the giver is not motivated by love, it profiteth nothing.
2. (14-7) Virtues of love. Love is long suffering, kind, not envious. Those filled with love seek for others' wellbeing. Love never fails. It is stronger than any force.
3. (8-12) There are some groups who use verses eight through ten to indicate the gifts of the Spirit are no longer in operation today. They contend the gifts were given to aid and direct man in the ways of God, until the Bible could be completed. Their view that the completed Bible is the item of perfection mentioned in verse ten. And also, that the

gifts were the items referred to as "in part". Of course, the above doctrine will not hold up to the scripture test. The correct view will be stated by explaining each verse.

Verse eight is high lighting love, Love will never fail. Under no circumstances will love ever fail. And love can be present and beneficial twenty-four hours a day. The gifts do have their limitations. They are useful and of benefit only under the circumstances that each particular gift is given for. For example, the gift of tongues is not a gift to be used twenty-four hours a day. It has its place and is a beneficial gift when administered properly. But love has no limitations. Love is always in order, whereas a particular gift may be out of order at a particular time. An example of the limitation of the gifts of the spirit is as follows. Prophecies, knowledge, tongues, will not keep homes united, but love will. This is not to do away with the gifts, but to understand them properly.

Verse nine explains the limitations of one's knowledge. One's knowledge of the present and of times to come are limited to the revelations given by the Spirit. However, limitations are lifted by God 's Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9-10, John 16:13). On this side of glory, one cannot know of the

things of heaven except by God 's Word and what the Spirit reveals. One only has a partial (in part) knowledge of heaven without that revelation. However, verse ten reveals there will be a day when the partial knowledge will be done away with. The partial knowledge will become full knowledge as the saints of God are brought into God 's kingdom when Jesus returns. The statement "when that which is perfect is come" can refer to one of several things. Such as: the return of Christ; or the perfect state of affairs that will be ushered in at Christ's return, or the reunion of the saints with God in an eternal home. In that day the saints will behold for themselves and have firsthand knowledge of heaven. It will not be a partial knowledge as they now have. The apostle exhorted the Corinthians to seek the things of God that

"so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (I Corinthians 1:7)¹¹⁸

He did not exhort them to come behind in no gift until the Bible was completed, but rather until Jesus comes. Upon Christ's return there will then be no need for the gifts of the Spirit.

The apostle continues his thought in verse eleven of I Corinthians chapter thirteen. He uses the illustration of how a child has more knowledge when grown than when young. The increase of knowledge comes from more exposure. Just

as people are ignorant of many things of God due to lack of exposure. The children of God presently have limited knowledge and visions of heaven (except God reveal it). "But then face to face" (verse 12) there will be an immediate increase in knowledge. The writer of Corinthians concludes the chapter by acknowledging faith, hope, and love. But he contends that though faith and hope are wonderful, love is greater. Then he proceeds into a detailed study of the gift of tongues.

IV. Preview of Chapter Fourteen

Before one can understand chapter fourteen, there must be an understanding of the various functions of the one term "tongues". First, it is used in the function as the initial sign that an individual has received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Secondly it is used in one's personal prayers and praise to God. Finally, it is used as a gift of the Spirit. There exists confusion over these three different facets. Many put it all together as one function under the term "gift of the spirit". Because of the need for clarification, each function will be discussed before discussing chapter fourteen. Of course, regardless of which function is used, it is an unknown language to the speaker. The language may be a foreign language that others might understand. Or a language that no one on earth understands. The main emphasis is that it is unknown to the speaker. The terms

“unknown” and “other tongues” are synonymous.

A. Tongues as the initial sign of the Holy Ghost

1. This is an experience that all who receive the Holy Ghost will experience. The statement "I received the Holy Ghost, but I did not speak in tongues because I do not have the gift of the Spirit" is an example of people's confusion. The gift of the Spirit and speaking in tongues as the initial sign that one has received the Holy Ghost are two totally different functions.

2. Isaiah 28:11-12 refers to speaking in another tongue. There are those who contend that this represents the captivity period. A time when God judged (spoke to) His people, Israel, through a foreign empire. This empire spoke a language foreign to Israel (another tongue). This myth is dispelled, however, by reading the next verse. Verse twelve associates another tongue experience with a rest, and a refreshing that causes the weary to rest. Has anyone ever known captivity to be a time of refreshing! Of course not, this was prophetically referring to when God would pour His Spirit out, as in Acts.

3. Acts 2:2-4, 11, 14: As the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, they all spake in tongues (verse 4). The next few verses explain the reaction of the multitude. A multitude consisted of various nationalities. Many say the purpose of the strange phenomenon of tongues was to enable the disciples to preach the gospel to the different nations represented.

But the scriptures do not say the disciples preached the gospel in tongues. But verse eleven declares what they were doing. They were praising and magnifying God because of His wonderful works. The preaching of the gospel began in verse fourteen. The apostle Peter proclaimed the gospel, probably in the Greek language. The Greek language was the common denominator between the various nations, Alexander the Great had taken his language throughout the world in his conquests. And that language was used years later to allow various nationalities to converse.

4. Implied tongues (Acts 8 :15). Admittedly, this passage does not say that the Samaritans spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost. However, the evidence is overwhelming that this indeed did occur. Verse sixteen speaks of the Holy Ghost having not fallen on any of them. However, after prayer they received the Holy Ghost. Before going any further, some questions must be answered. Number one, how did the disciples know the Samaritans had not received the Holy Ghost? What evidence were they looking for, to verify the receiving of the Holy Ghost? The answer might be offered that the disciples were looking for the fruit of the Spirit. And true, that is one way that indicates if an individual has the Holy Ghost. However, it takes some time for people to bear fruit. And the events in this chapter were happening instantly. One moment, no Holy Ghost,

the next moment, there it was. A similar question must be asked in regard to verse seventeen. How could the disciples instantly know the Samaritans had the Holy Ghost? There must have been a universal sign recognized by all. By using other scripture settings along with this text, it would be very proper to state "because they heard them speak with tongues, the disciples knew the Holy Ghost had fallen". Also, Simon apparently saw enough evidence that he desired to duplicate it (verse 18). He was willing to buy this power. Of course, his desire was not to bring peace and deliverance to people, but to sell merchandise for profit. And what customer would buy this new merchandise (Holy Ghost infilling) if there was no evidence (tongues) of purchase?

5. Acts 10:44. Again the question, how did Peter know the Holy Ghost fell? The Jews had doubts that the Gentiles could receive the Holy Ghost. However, that doubt was removed: "for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God"¹¹⁹ (verse 46).
6. Acts 19: 6. This is another example of the infilling of the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues being inseparable.
7. James 1:26, 3:8. The above scriptures were given as examples to show that all who receive the Holy Ghost speak in tongues. And that this speaking in tongues was not the gift of the Spirit, but simply a sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. And the speakers were magnifying God and not trying to exhort

a congregation, as the gift of tongues does. These passages did not indicate why God chose this method. But some verses in James give some possible clues as to why God chose the tongue. Chapter three describes the destructive virtues of the tongue. No man has the ability to tame. Yet, chapter one indicates, one's religion is vain if the tongue is not brought under control. The only answer to this situation is to allow God (not man) to control the tongue. God has control of one's tongue when the vessel becomes obedient to God. This yielded vessel receives the Holy Ghost and speaks in tongues as the Spirit (not man's ability to learn a language) gives the utterance (Acts 2:4).

B. Tongues in Personal Praise or devotion

Another use of tongues is when an individual speaks in tongues in prayer or praise. Not everyone may experience this. There are scriptural references to this manifestation which is given primarily for the edification of the individual believer. Some scriptural references are I Corinthians 14:4, 14-15, 18; Romans 8:26-27. As stated earlier, all may not experience this, but should. This should not be confused with the function of tongues used when one receives the Holy Ghost.

C. Tongues as the Gift of the Spirit

While tongues may be used for self-edification, there is also a function which enables the entire church to be blessed. This is the function as the gift of the Spirit. To be of real benefit, the gift of interpretation must be used in conjunction

with this gift (I Corinthians 5). Many questions concerning this gift will be answered in the verse-by-verse analysis of I Corinthians chapter fourteen.

V. Chapter Fourteen

Paul's writing is very unique and has to be read closely. At a glance, there will be passages that will appear that Paul is opposed to speaking in tongues. But in the same breath, he will magnify speaking in tongues. There are two important points the reader has to determine. Is Paul speaking of the gift of the Spirit, or one's personal edification? Once the reader has determined which function Paul is speaking of, the correct interpretation can be determined.

A. Individual verses explained

1. Love must be present before, during, and after any gift. The believer's desire should be to be of benefit to the entire church. The gift of prophecy is preferred over an individual self-edification use of tongues.
2. He that edifies himself does not benefit the entire church as much, because others cannot understand what he is speaking.
3. (3-14) He that prophesieth edifies and exhorts the church. Prophecy is not limited to speaking of the future or being the bearer of gloom and doom. Probably more times than not, the gift of prophecy is speaking forth rather than fore-telling. Many times, a minister while preaching may be

used in this gift, to proclaim God 's messages without the congregation distinguishing the gift from the minister's normal preaching!

4. (5-6) Paul places a plus for individual speaking in tongues but expresses the feeling that as far as the church's benefit it would be more profitable for prophecy. Then Paul explains the equality of the gifts of tongues with prophecy, provided the gift of interpretation is present.
5. (7-11) There must be clarity in the message, the warning, the alarm, etc. if those affected are benefited.
6. (12) Again, Paul stresses the need for all members to receive benefit.
7. (13-14) An acknowledgement that indeed an individual is edified with Speaking in tongues, but the benefit to others is limited. Also equates praying in tongues with Spirit praying.
8. (15-18) But before one comes to the conclusion that Paul is condemning speaking in tongues, read again. He states that he will pray and sing with the spirit (speaking in tongues). But he also will pray and sing in native tongue (with understanding). There is a time and place for self-edification. And there are times when other methods are more appropriate. For example, if one has the responsibility of conducting the service and exhorting others, there is a necessity of speaking so that all may understand. Then Paul injects one more time his approval of speaking in

tongues by declaring he speaks in tongues more than all of the others.

9. (19) Yet in the church, as a teacher, Paul prefers speaking with an understanding to the congregation.
10. (21) Paul uses a scripture from Isaiah 28:11 to support God's approval of speaking in tongues.
11. (22-23) Tongues are a sign to unbelievers. Unbelievers are at times amazed, startled, scared, doubtful, and scared at tongues. And there have been occasions when the unbeliever understood the message in tongues even though the speaker did not.

Some may feel verse twenty-two conflicts with verse twenty-three. The key to understanding is in verse twenty-three. The word "all" is the factor. Even though tongues will serve as a sign for the unbeliever, the benefit will be erased if nothing is spoken in the native language for the entire service. There is no problem when gifts are operated properly. But if everyone (all) speaks in tongues the entire service, no benefit is rendered to the unbeliever.
12. (24-25) The benefit is when the gifts are administered properly as directed in later verses. And also during the singing, testifying, and the preaching of God's word In the native language.
13. (26-31) The emphasis is again placed on the fact that the gifts of the Spirit are for the purpose of edifying

the body. They are not for an individual's self-exhortation. Paul gave some rules in regard to the proper administration of the gift of tongues. The entire service is not to be devoted to tongues. There should be no more than two or three manifestations of the gift of tongues. And for them to be useful there should be an interpreter.

The reason for the guideline of two or three times is very practical. If there is not going to be an interpretation after several times, there probably will not be one after ten times either. And there is no need to waste the remainder of the service.

Now, some questions arise when there is no interpretation. It could be a case of several different situations involved. Number one, the possibility exists that the one giving the message in tongues was out of order. And in this case, there should be no interpretation. On the other hand, the message in tongues might have been proper, but someone else is not yielding to God by failing to interpret. A timely word of caution is, do not jump to conclusions and form negative opinions or become judgmental. God placed the pastor in charge to be able to handle a situation that may become out of order. Allow the pastor and God to resolve problems associated with the misuse of gifts of the Spirit. A judgmental mind might be ready to criticize, when the problem may be ignorance on a sincere believer's part. He may not know how to yield to a gift of the Spirit and may be afraid of making a mistake.

Some guidelines for yielding to the gifts of the Spirit are as follows. If you are very concerned about being out of order and want to be cautious, that is a good indication that God is dealing with you. On the other hand, there are others who just want to go to the forefront and be the loudest and most visible. That is a danger signal.

14. (32—33) Just because one feels God moving upon them, does not mean one is to blurt out at a moment. Of course, this is not to say one has a license to quench the Spirit.

Usually, God is arranging events in the service so a manifestation of a gift would be proper. For example, if God deals with an individual to give a message in tongues, God is usually working with whoever is directing the service. It is amazing how God works to avoid confusion. There have been cases where the congregation may be singing loud, and then the song leader might stop and ask the congregation to pray or wait on God just a moment. During that interval the same God that caused that change of order may move on someone to give a message. The benefit of the message would not have been received if everyone was singing so loud it could not be heard.

15. Just in case someone has missed Paul's point, he leaves instructions that tongues should not be forbidden. But does specify for services to be conducted decently and in order.

B. Review of Tongues

Tongues is used in three different functions.

1. As the evidence that one has received the Holy Ghost. This should not be confused with the gift of tongues or tongues for self-edification. All who receive the Holy Ghost speak in tongues in this function. Any who feel they have received the Holy Ghost without speaking in tongues are ignoring the examples from the book of Acts.
2. Tongues is used for oneself edification as they worship and pray to God. All do not experience this. However, most Holy Ghost filled believers should.
3. Tongues is also used as a gift of the Spirit to edify a body of believers. All may not be used in this particular gift. For this gift to be of real benefit, the gift of interpretation is also manifested.