

Twelve Reasons to Speak in Tongues

1. Tongues is the initial physical evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit (but it must never be the only evidence! See Acts 6:3, 11:52). God help the Christian where tongues is the only sign they have received the Holy Spirit!). According to Acts 2:4; ". . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in other tongues". Speaking in tongues was the first thing they did. Acts 10:45-6; ". . . on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost... for they heard them speak with tongues" Acts 10:47; ". . . these ... have received the Holy Ghost as well as we". How did Peter know the household of Cornelius had received the Holy Spirit? He reported: "for" they spoke with tongues just like he and the other apostles had on the day of Pentecost. If that was the apostolic measuring rod, dare we use any other?

Hypothetically, however, couldn't one possibly be full of the Spirit and not have spoken with tongues yet? In all fairness to the Word, they were "filled" before they "spoke". Couldn't the space between these two events be minutes, hours, or at times possibly even days, weeks, or even longer? Don't many "Now" prophecies take many years to be fulfilled? Don't some get a healing touch from the Holy Spirit, yet it takes weeks for it to be manifested? Many Christians have Christ within them, yet have little peace or joy and the fruit of the Spirit doesn't fully show in them. So, couldn't it likewise be possible one could have received the Holy Spirit baptism, and not yet completely manifested all the Holy Spirit has for him, including tongues?

Of course, if so, this person would be living below his rights and privileges, and would be lacking the use of the very tool God has given him to stay full of the Spirit. Reader, even if you have had a dramatic encounter with the Holy Spirit, and consider yourself having "received the Holy Spirit" if you have not yet spoken in tongues, you should earnestly seek the full manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work. Paul commended the Corinthians because they "came behind in no gift" (I Cor. 1:7). Why would you want to "come behind" in any gift, including tongues? And, if the apostles looked for tongues as indicative of the Holy Spirit infilling, we too should not be satisfied until we have that Acts 10:47 "as well as we" experience and the potential to enjoy the following other 11 reasons to speak in tongues. Now, just because I made a few hypothetical observations, don't write me and ask me to remove your name from my mailing list because I am "a traitor to the tongues as initial evidence" Pentecostal tradition. I know of no one who is out there trying harder to help people receive the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues than I (Recently, in Carrolton, Illinois, 10 people raised their hands they had received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues for the first time.)

Still, we need to be very careful not to doctrinally so limit God, that when He does something outside our expectation, we immediately reject it as "unscriptural" or "of the devil." God sure surprised classical Pentecostals back in the 60's when He started filling Catholics with the Holy Spirit. Some fought that. Then many fought the Jesus movement when newly saved hippies brought their bare feet and long hair into the sanctuary. Others fought the prophecy movement of the 80's, and others still the laughing movement. It is human nature to reject anything outside our belief system. Let's not reject the next unusual dealing of God with his people. Maybe there is something beyond tongues He plans to bring to the last day church. 1 Cor. 2:9: ". . . eye hath not seen nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". Is this just talking about heaven? Or, could he have something prepared for the final days to equip the church with unusual gifts necessary to reap the final harvest and endure the hardships of the last days? Just a consideration.

Also, it should be noted just because one speaks with tongues does not prove they are currently full of the Holy Spirit. Tongues is the initial evidence, but it is not the ongoing evidence! I

remember hearing the biggest gossip I have ever known kneeling at an altar speaking in tongues. It grieved my spirit.

The Israelites were circumcised as a covenant of their relationship with him. Later, even though they were completely away from God and worshipping idols, they still had the "evidence" of circumcision in their flesh. Experience shows most people who backslide lose their ability to speak in tongues as well, but I think it would be a big mistake to let tongues "prove" salvation or a present Holy walk in the Holy Spirit. I am not diminishing tongues! I am only trying to bring some perspective to our stance on tongues. Our goal should not be to be full of "tongues" but full of the Spirit! The late Howard P. Courtney, a great Pentecostal patriarch once said, "My goal in life is to be a man full of the Holy Ghost." I never forgot that. It's my goal too. Isn't it yours? But, there are simple ways tongues help.

2. Tongues builds your faith: Jude 20; "ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." As Roy Hicks, Sr. says, "every time you speak in tongues, you build your faith, because every time you speak in tongues, you use your faith". Praying in a language people make fun of, the devil says you are making up, that sounds like gibberish and, while doing so, you usually feel nothing, takes faith. "We walk by faith, and not by sight" 11 Cor. 5:7. Going by feelings is for spiritual babies. Grow up in your faith! Stop being "moved" by emotion. Speak by faith and for faith.

3. Tongues edifies you: 1 Corinthians 14:4; "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself." The word "edifieth" means "builds up". The modern Language Bible says, "improves himself." You "build" your muscles by lifting weights. You "build" your spirit by praying in tongues, for when you pray in tongues your "spirit prays" (1 Cor. 14:14) and thus "flexes" its muscles! Does your spirit look more like Arnold Schwarzenegger, or more like Pee Wee Herman? How much you pray in tongues can help determine that!

4. Tongues helps solve mysteries in your life: 1 Cor. 14:2; "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God for no man understandeth him (this scripture forever disproves the theory that the purpose of tongues was to preach the gospel in the language of a foreign people, for it clearly says "no man" understands it). The Acts 2 experience of speaking in the language of visiting nations was a "one time" event and the exception to the rule that "no man understands him." (Another reason to be less dogmatic about fixed rules of doctrine). 14:2 goes on to say "howbeit, in the Spirit, he speaketh mysteries."

We all have questions and problems for which we are trying to find the answer. They sometimes seem to us a mystery. When we pray "in the Spirit", we are allowing the Holy Spirit to pray on our behalf and help us pray about those mysteries. He helps us discover the answers through such prayer. He is the Spirit of truth, promised to "guide us into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). One of the ways he guides us into this truth is the Word (John 8:31, 32) but another way is by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Praying in tongues is one way we submit ourselves to His guidance. Perhaps this is one reason Paul said, "let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret" (1 Cor. 14:13). Interpretation need not only be in a church service for the edification of the body, but could include your own prayer closet, that you might understand how the Holy Spirit is helping you solve your mysteries. If you are troubled about something, spend time in the Spirit's presence, with much speaking in tongues. Either by the gift of interpretation or simply a quickening of revelation to your spirit, you can discover the resolution to what previously was a mystery.

5. Tongues help us pray accurately: Romans 8:26-28: "The Spirit maketh intercession for us". Every time you pray in tongues, you allow the Holy Spirit to pray through you and on your behalf. Pray for something in English for awhile as best you know how, then follow with a time of praying

in tongues, believing the Holy Spirit is continuing to pray about what you have been praying about, but always "according to the will of God". You are never praying more "on target" than when you pray in tongues. The phrase "groanings which cannot be uttered" could refer to the fact the Holy Spirit knows terrible things that are happening around you or about to happen -- things for which you would deeply groan in prayer if you were aware of them, but they "cannot be uttered" by you, because the situation which would surely cause you to groan is simply beyond your knowledge. The Spirit who knows all things (I Cor. 2:10) will use your praying in tongues to groan (cry with a great burden) with and for you. I make myself "groan" for a moment every day when I begin to pray my especially set aside seven minutes in tongues, simply to remind me what I am doing is real serious business and if the Holy Spirit is groaning about it, then, by faith, I should too!

Oh, how important are intercessory tongues! Daily give him your mouth and your heart, allowing him to freely intercede for needs as he deems best. In the context of partnering with the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayer; we are then promised in v. 28, "all things work together for good." But, I remind you, it is only in this context of prayer-partnership with the Spirit we are promised this. "Called according to his purpose" includes the call to intercessory tongues. We're never walking more in that "purpose" than when we pray "in the spirit."

6. Tongues is a weapon of spiritual warfare: Eph. 6:18; "praying ... in the Spirit". Paul concludes his list of the armor of God by mentioning prayer, including a most important aspect of that prayer, "in the Spirit". It's easy to see how praying in tongues would be one of the most powerful weapons of warfare against the devil, since when you pray in the Holy Spirit, you allow the Spirit, who sees exactly what the devil is up to in the invisible, to help you pray against his attacks! What a team: you, your tongue, and the Holy Spirit!

7. Tongues is the God given means to increase the work of the Spirit in your life: Gal. 6:7, 8; "he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap." The law of sowing and reaping works with the Holy Spirit, as well as sin or giving. If you want more of the Spirit in your life (His presence, His power, His guidance, His gifts) doesn't it make sense to pray a lot "in the Spirit?"

8. Tongues rests and refreshes your weary soul: Isa. 28:11, 12; "with another tongue. . . This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing". That this is prophetic of tongues is clear, for Paul quotes this verse in 1 Cor. 14:21 in defending tongues. Just as our bodies need rest and refreshing, so do our spirits. Praying in tongues is how we refresh our spirits. Salvation gives us a well of living water (Isa. 12:3, Jn. 14:14). Speaking in tongues, as a vital part of the blessing of receiving the Holy Spirit, becomes a means of releasing "rivers of living water" (John 7:37-39). Next time you are depressed or discouraged, speak in tongues until rest comes!

9. Tongues is a pathway to being a person through whom God can pour out power: Acts 1:8; "ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me". Witnessing, prayer, personal ministry, and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit are all the manifestation and work of the Holy Spirit. Paul's challenge to "Stir up the gift of God, which is in you" in II Tim. 1:6 is a clear call to do everything you can to manifest God's gifts. Tongues is one of the simplest way you help stir up Spiritual gifts.

10. Tongues is a way we worship the Lord: I Cor. 14:16, 17 tells us speaking in tongues can be "giving of thanks." Adding to this I Cor. 14:15; "I will sing with the spirit" shows praying and singing in tongues is a vital part of worship toward God. Some churches encourage such forms of worship in the church service. Others prefer such expression of worship to be reserved for private worship. I personally like both expressions.

11. Tongues is a pathway to being prophetic people: Joel 2:28; "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions". Revelation knowledge and revelation gifts are the expected overflow of receiving the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19:6; "Paul laid hands on them (The Ephesians), the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied". In I Cor. 14:39 Paul said, "covet to prophecy" and in 14:5, "I would that ye all spoke in tongues, but rather (even more, not instead of) that ye prophesied". In these verses he reveals two truths: First, people who speak in tongues can prophesy. They have all the power, anointing, and scriptural requisites to exercise the gift. And, two, Christians should never stop at tongues, but should ever desire to move deeper in revelation knowledge, including prophecy.

12. Tongues is a most important means of staying full of the Holy Spirit: Doesn't it stand to reason, if the first time we were filled with the Holy Spirit, we spoke in tongues, if we continue to speak in tongues it will help us stay full of the Holy Spirit? Paul exhorts in 5:18, "be filled with the Spirit". And Paul had discovered the secret to being a man "filled of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13:11). He tells us how in 1 Cor. 14:18, "I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than you all". And, remember, he said that to a church that had a problem speaking in tongues too much!!! Let's stay full like Paul. Speak in tongues a lot!