

"...*desire earnestly spiritual gifts.*" (1 Corinthians 14:1)  
Do you speak in tongues? Do you desire spiritual gifts?

### The Gift of Tongues In The Church

The gift of speaking in tongues can be used publicly in the church to speak to God's people when there is interpretation (the language of the people in the church). "*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.*" (1 Corinthians 14:5) What Paul was saying is that a message in tongues spoken publicly with interpretation can be as effective in edifying the church as a word of prophesy. So, God will use a message in tongues with interpretation to speak to His people in public gatherings in the church.

### Questions Commonly Asked About Speaking In

Tongues:

#### Q. Is Speaking in Tongues for Everyone?

There seems to be a distinction between the gift of tongues and speaking in tongues as a prayer language. A person may use the gift of tongues privately as a prayer language for personal communion with God. However, they may be led by the Holy Spirit to use that gift in church to publicly proclaim a message from God. Of course, there must be an interpretation. Some Christians refer to 1 Corinthians 12:30 to support the view that not all are given the gift of speaking in tongues. However, Paul is talking about the gift of tongues used in the church. See 1 Corinthians 12:28. Not all speak in tongues publicly, as in the church. That is why Paul makes the statement, "*All do not speak with tongues, do they?*" He is not referring here to the personal prayer language of tongues, but to the public use of tongues in church. Paul said, "*...desire earnestly spiritual gifts.*" Speaking in tongues is the one gift that God provided to personally strengthen the individual believer. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that God makes it available to everyone.

#### Q. Must I speak in tongues to have the Holy Spirit living in me?

No! Every "born-again" believer has the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. You could not experience spiritual change or conversion without the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

(Romans 8:11) You could not have a spiritual relationship with God without the presence of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:16 and 1 Corinthians 2:12) When you believe and trust in God's message of salvation through Jesus Christ, you are "sealed" with the Holy

Spirit and assured of God's eternal inheritance. (Ephesians 1:13,14)

#### Q. How do I know that Satan won't give me a false gift of tongues?

Though Satan can counterfeit things in the spiritual realm, even the experience of speaking in tongues, we must not allow such thoughts to distract us from the truth of God's word. God will give good gifts to those who are seeking His Holy Spirit and He will not allow Satan to interfere. (Luke 11:9-13)

#### Q. How do I know that the tongues I speak are from the Holy Spirit and not from me?

Most Spirit-filled Christians who speak in tongues ask themselves this question. It is natural to wonder if this is just something we made up or if it really has any spiritual value. We have these doubts because our mind does not understand what we are saying and it sounds a lot like our own way of talking. Remember, speaking in tongues is an exercise of faith in which we choose to allow the Holy Spirit to use our tongue to speak prayers, intercessions, and worship to God. Like with other spiritual gifts used in the church, there will be questions as to how much is the gift of God's doing and how much is it man's doing. That is the nature of the spiritual realm and we must be willing to exercise our faith to use spiritual gifts in spite of our questions.

#### Q. How can I receive the gift of tongues?

First, seek to be empowered by God's Holy Spirit by asking Jesus in prayer to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Second, understand that one of the evidences of that power is receiving the gift of speaking in tongues. Third, make yourself available for the Holy Spirit to speak a different language through your mouth. As you praise and worship the Lord through the day, expect the Holy Spirit to bring words and syllables to your mind that are of a different language. Finally, step out in faith and speak those words and syllables that God has given you. You have to open your mouth and speak what the Holy Spirit gives you.

#### Do You Speak In Tongues?

Have you backed away from seeking the Baptism with the Holy Spirit because of the issue of speaking in tongues? Don't! God has provided power for you to experience. Have you been hesitant to seek the gift of speaking in tongues because mystery and misunderstanding seem to surround this experience? Don't be! It is a precious gift that God wants to give every believer who seeks to be filled with His Holy Spirit and experience His supernatural power.

# The Gift of Speaking in Tongues

Understanding the  
Value and Use of  
This Special Gift

Pastor Lynn Kern

KNOW THE TRUTH



"...AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE!"

## Mystery

The gift of speaking in tongues is one of those experiences in the Christian church today that seems mysterious and irrational.

Yet, God gave it as a special gift, a blessing for His people and His church to use as a supernatural tool to enhance their spiritual life. Because this special gift, like other gifts of the Holy Spirit, is supernatural, there is something of a mysterious quality to it. Like other aspects of our Christian life, child-like faith is required to step out into the spiritual realm and believe that what we speak and do according to God's word has value and makes a difference in God's kingdom and in the world. God is supernatural and our relationship with Him is supernatural. Thus, we should not fear or withdraw from this supernatural gift of speaking in tongues because it seems mysterious.

## Misunderstanding

The gift of speaking in tongues is often misunderstood by many in the Christian church. There are those who reject its use today by claiming that it was a gift only for the first century church and the Apostles. There are those who believe that speaking in tongues has very little practical spiritual value and should not be used because it promotes controversy and disunity in the church. Some believe that the modern experience of speaking in tongues is just an emotionally made-up "glibberish" or of Satanic influence. And, there are those in "Spirit-filled" churches that are exposed to the teaching and to the experience of speaking in tongues, but who are leery and intimidated by it.

## Truth and Understanding

The purpose of this tract is to provide Biblical truth about speaking in tongues that can help you understand the value and operation of this special gift from God. Obviously, we believe that the gift of speaking in tongues is for God's people today and a valuable gift in the church. We want to encourage you to be open to the truth about speaking in tongues, seek to understand its value and purpose, and experience its blessing in your own Christian life.

## Speaking In Tongues and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit

The first appearance of speaking in tongues occurred when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus on the day of Pentecost. According to Jesus, these disciples were to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4) Jesus referred to this experience as being "...baptized

*with the Holy Spirit*" which would result in them receiving power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. (Acts 1:5,8) When they received that power on the day of Pentecost, they "...began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance." (Acts 2:4) In two other instances in the book of Acts, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon believers and they spoke in tongues. (Acts 10:45,46; 19:6) Speaking in tongues was a supernatural experience that gave evidence to the Apostles and to those seeking God's power that they had received it.

## Speaking In Tongues Is A Power Gift

Speaking in tongues is evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit because it is one of the supernatural gifts of power. It would make sense that God would demonstrate the power He bestowed upon the disciples with some evidence of power. They needed to see it and experience it in order to know they had it. It was the evidence of speaking in tongues that convinced the disciples on the day of Pentecost that they had received the power and that convinced Peter that God's power of the Holy Spirit had come to the Gentiles in Acts 10:45-47.

## A Special Gift For Spirit-filled Believers

The Apostle Paul taught that speaking in tongues was the one gift of all the supernatural gifts that was for personal use and edification of the believer. All the other gifts were to be used to benefit the members of the church and edify the church body. It seems spiritually logical and practical that God would want to give each Spirit-filled believer a special gift that would help strengthen their individual Christian life and regularly demonstrate His power in their life. This is what God did when He made available to us this special gift of speaking in tongues.

## Of What Value Is Speaking In Tongues?

The Apostle Paul taught the church at Corinth about the use and value of the gift of speaking in tongues. In I Corinthians 14 he describes the value of speaking in tongues as he contrasts the gift with the gift of prophecy. Though Paul wrote I Corinthians 14 to correct the misuse of speaking in tongues in the congregation, his instruction provides us with a clear teaching on the correct use of this gift. In spite of the misuse of speaking in tongues by some in the church at Corinth, Paul promotes the importance of the gift by saying, "*Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues...*" (I Corinthians 14:5a)

## A Prayer Language

Many Spirit-filled Christians refer to speaking in tongues as a prayer language, another way to commune with God. "*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.*" (I Corinthians 14:2) Though the person's mind does not understand what is being spoken, the purpose is to pray to God about spiritual things that only God understands and that are inspired by the Holy Spirit. At times we may be offering praise and worship to God as we speak in tongues. At times, we may be interceding in prayer for a person or need that is unknown to us. At other times, we may exercise our prayer language because we don't know how to pray or what to pray in a particular situation. Our praying in tongues can bypass our intellect and emotions so that we can come confidently before God without distractions and confusion that is caused by our human limitations.

## For Spiritual Strength

"*One who speaks in tongues edifies himself...*" The person who speaks in tongues will build-up their spirit and will strengthen their spiritual life. Because the Holy Spirit is supernaturally involved in working through our human spirit to enable us to speak in tongues, our own spiritual awareness of God's work in our life will be affected and our spiritual life is strengthened. "*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.*" (I Corinthians 14:14) Our human spirit becomes one with God's Holy Spirit and there is a sense of spiritual life flowing through us. God has provided us with a gift that can regularly supply us with needed power and strength as we live our Christian life.

## As A Sign For Unbelievers

"*So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers;*..." (I Corinthians 14:22a) In some cases, as it was in Acts 2:5-8, the experience of speaking in tongues is used by God as a sign to unbelievers of God's supernatural power. This demonstration of His power, like other spiritual gifts, can be used to gain the attention of unbelievers and prepare them to receive the message of salvation through Christ.

## As An Introduction Into Spiritual Gifts

As was true of the early church, speaking in tongues is often the first supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit that a believer experiences. Because many Christians receive the gift of tongues as a result of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, they become aware of the supernatural power of God and make themselves available to other spiritual gifts. They will often follow the Apostle Paul's advice to