



The Gift Of The Holy Spirit

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the Holy Spirit
since you believed?***

Acts 19:2

Greg Fritz

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Introduction

As I was preparing the notes for this book, I realized that I have been living the Spirit-filled life for over 40 years and that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest experiences of my life, second only to the gift of salvation. Over the last 40 years, I have personally seen thousands of people receive this gift around the world.

Most of what we know about the gift of the Holy Spirit comes from five accounts in the book of Acts where individuals were filled with the Spirit. By studying these accounts, as well as other passages from the Old and New Testaments, the teaching in this book will explain from the Scriptures what the gift of the Holy Spirit is, who this gift is for and how to receive it. Several chapters are devoted to the subject of speaking in tongues and its importance in the life of a believer, and some of the most common questions about speaking in tongues are answered in the final chapter.

Whether you are seeking the gift of the Holy Spirit for yourself or desire to lead others into this rich experience, this book is designed to be a handbook on the subject and equip you with the truths you need.

My prayer is that this teaching will help many who are hungry for more of God receive this wonderful gift.

Chapter 1

The Gift

On one of the most holy Jewish feasts of the year, the Feast of Pentecost, we find an event in the book of Acts that changed the world. A prayer meeting was held in an upper room, attended by 120 disciples of Jesus, and something unusual happened. The power of God fell, and as a result, a great noise occurred. The prayers and praise of this small group caused such a commotion that a crowd gathered outside.

They were amazed and perplexed as they heard the disciples speaking in tongues and demanded an explanation. The apostle Peter was one of the leaders, and we have his first sermon recorded in Acts 2. As he concluded his message about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, he gave the invitation to all who heard:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

—Acts 2:38-39

Peter was encouraging his audience to be saved and to receive the gift of

the Holy Spirit just as the disciples had. This was an important day in church history and a life-changing moment for those who received this power from on high. They went from that place, preaching the gospel with signs, wonders and miracles. This gift is still available today and is still being offered to believers. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. What He did for them back then, He will do for us now.

The Bible uses a variety of terms for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is spoken of in several passages. To better understand this gift, it will be helpful to look at the words the Scriptures use to describe it.

In the previous verse, Peter called it “the gift” and “the promise.”

Jesus also called it “the promise” in Luke 24:49. He said, *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”*

The word *promise* is used because this gift had been promised centuries earlier by God through the prophet Joel:

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

—Joel 2:28-29

The promise was also made through the prophet Isaiah:

For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring;

—Isaiah 44:3

This powerful experience was foreordained by God and reserved specifically for this new dispensation of grace. The apostle Paul highly recommended this gift as well. He called it “receiving the Holy Ghost.”

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

—Acts 19:1-2 (KJV)

After questioning these disciples of John the Baptist and realizing they had not yet been born again, Paul got them saved, baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands.

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

—Acts 19:6

When the Spirit was initially poured out in Acts 2, Luke, the writer of Acts, called it “being filled with the Holy Spirit.”

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:4

John the Baptist spoke of the gift in graphic terms, describing it as “a baptism with fire.”

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

—Matthew 3:11

In summary, we have various men of God, promoting and describing the gift of the Holy Spirit, using different terms and different descriptions:

- The gift of the Holy Spirit
- The promise
- Receiving the Holy Spirit
- Being filled with the Spirit

- The pouring out of the Spirit
- Being baptized in the Holy Spirit

All these terms refer to the same experience, and as we've seen, it's recommended by an impressive group of apostles and prophets—including Isaiah, Joel, Peter, Paul, John the Baptist and Jesus Himself.

This gift was so important in doing the work of God that just before He ascended to heaven, Jesus commanded the disciples to wait until they received it before they attempted anything else.

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

—Luke 24:49

Having been Spirit-filled for over 40 years, I would like to add my endorsement to those above. Receiving the Holy Spirit is one of the greatest experiences of my life, second only to receiving salvation. I've never been the same since I was baptized with the Holy Spirit in 1979, and I can tell you from experience, there is nothing more helpful in living the Christian life than the power of the Holy Spirit!

Chapter 2

Our Holy Ghost Heritage

Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit makes a huge difference in the life of a believer. It affects the way we worship, the way we live life and the way we serve God. This change is recognized by friends and enemies alike—so much so that Spirit-filled believers and congregations have been labeled by the world and by the church.

Let's look at some different terms that have been used to identify Spirit-filled believers while briefly covering the history of the Spirit-filled movement.

Pentecostals

This is a word that will forever be associated with those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit was originally poured out on the day of Pentecost as recorded in the book of Acts. Until the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2, the word *Pentecost* was only associated with a feast observed by the nation of Israel every year, celebrating the beginning of harvest. *Pentecost* literally means *fiftieth* because it was celebrated 50 days after the Jewish Feast of Passover.

These Jewish feasts were instituted by God and were types and shadows of the coming Messiah and the kingdom of God. Jesus took them very seriously as He was literally fulfilling them one by one. Jesus eagerly anticipated the Passover meal He shared with His disciples the night before His crucifixion.

When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

— Luke 22:14-15

To understand the significance of Pentecost, let me briefly explain Passover. Passover was a feast celebrated in Israel every spring to remember the time the death angel passed over the Jews in Egypt the night before the exodus. They were instructed by God to kill a lamb and put its blood on the door posts of their homes and eat unleavened bread. When the death angel passed over the land that night, all the firstborn of the Egyptians died.

After this final judgment, Pharaoh relented and allowed the Jews to leave Egypt the next day. This divine deliverance from evil was called *the Passover* because the death angel passed over the homes of the Jewish people who had applied the blood of the lamb to their doorposts. The Feast of Passover was celebrated every year in the spring from that time forward by the nation of Israel. Although it was hidden in types and

shadows for generations, the lamb represented the Messiah, and the bread represented His body. Jesus updated this holy occasion as He ate the Passover meal with His disciples at what we call *the Last Supper*. At that time, He instituted the observance of Holy Communion by sharing the truth behind the symbolism.

And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."

—Luke 22:19-20

Jesus was fulfilling every prophecy made concerning His coming and His death, burial and resurrection as He moved forward on the divine timeline. Little did the disciples know as the Passover meal was concluded that night, the events that would unfold over the next 50 days would change the world forever.

The next day, Jesus was crucified and buried. Three days later, He was raised from the dead, and the Scriptures tell us He was seen by the disciples for the next 40 days. During this time, He spoke to them of the kingdom of God and presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3).

Luke described what happened next in Acts 1:

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

—Acts 1:4-5

And they watched Jesus ascend to heaven:

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

—Acts 1:9

Notice, He told them, “*You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*” He didn’t tell them how many days it would be. At this time, it had been about 43 days since Passover. The next holy day was the Feast of Pentecost, which was celebrated 50 days after Passover. The disciples went back to Jerusalem to wait for the promise, not knowing when or how it would come. God, however, had predetermined that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the day of Pentecost.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them

divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:1-4

Because this historic event happened on the day of Pentecost (fifty or fiftieth), all who have received this gift are called *Pentecostals* to this day, and by God's divine providence, the word *Pentecost* will forever be used to describe the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's interesting to note that the next Jewish feast after Pentecost is the Feast of Trumpets, which celebrated the end of the harvest season.

We, as New Testament believers, are the spiritual Israel. We are living in the time between Pentecost—the celebration of the beginning of harvest—and the Feast of Trumpets, which signifies the end of the harvest season. For Israel, these were natural feasts, celebrating a natural harvest. For us, these events represent an ongoing spiritual harvest, which began on the day of Pentecost in an upper room over two thousand years ago and ends when the trumpet sounds at the end of the age. Thank God, we have the gift of the Holy Ghost to empower us to bring in a harvest of souls until the trumpet sounds and calls us home.

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

—Acts 1:8

Nearly every church historian agrees that the modern-day Pentecostal movement began in 1901 on New Year's Day in a Bible school in Topeka, Kansas, directed by a man named Charles Parham. Brother Parham had been teaching his students on the Holy Spirit, and they had come to the conclusion that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was available to believers in modern times, just like it was in the book of Acts—along with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. They had begun to pray and seek this experience at the very end of the year 1900.

The first person to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, accompanied by speaking in tongues, was Agnes Ozman, one of Parham's Bible school students, who spoke in tongues on the very first day of the new century—January 1, 1901.

According to J. Roswell Flower, the founding secretary of the Assemblies of God, Ozman's experience was the “touch felt round the world,” an event that “made the Pentecostal movement of the twentieth century.”

It was not until 1906, however, that Pentecostalism achieved worldwide attention through the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, led by the African-American preacher, William Joseph Seymour. He learned about the gift of the Holy Spirit in a Bible school that Parham conducted in Houston, Texas, in 1905. Invited to pastor a black Holiness church in Los Angeles in 1906, Seymour opened the historic meeting in April, 1906, in a former African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church building at 312 Azusa Street, in downtown Los Angeles.

For over three years, the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street conducted three services a day, seven days a week, where thousands of seekers received the Holy Spirit. Word of the revival was spread abroad through *The Apostolic Faith*, a paper Seymour sent out free of charge. From Azusa Street, Pentecostalism spread rapidly around the world, becoming a major force in the Christian church.

Charismatics

A flood of believers began to seek and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit during the 1960s and 1970s. Millions came from mainline Protestant denominations as well as the Catholic Church. This movement was so massive it could not be ignored, and it was at this time, those who were part of this Pentecostal explosion were labeled *Charismatics*, a word taken from the Greek word *charisma* which means *a gift of grace*. Hence, the modern use of the word *Charismatic* is a term used to describe those who have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In terms of overall numbers, *Christianity Today* estimates there are over 500 million Pentecostals/Charismatics worldwide. So, this thing was not “done in a corner;” it is a worldwide movement with a heritage that dates back to the book of Acts.

Non-Denominational

I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1979, so I was part of this group known as *Charismatics*. Many of us were not willing to go back to our mainline denominational churches, as our beliefs had changed as well as our style of worship. Consequently, there was a mass exodus from these denominations, and hundreds of churches were planted in storefront buildings and rented halls where these newly-baptized believers worshipped God with the freedom to exercise spiritual gifts and practice exuberant worship. These new churches were not affiliated with any denomination and so were known as non-denominational, independent churches.

I can't remember how many times during those years, I was asked by someone what kind of church I attended, and I would reply, "It's a non-denominational church." Most of the time that would satisfy them, and I wouldn't have to get into the details as to why I left the Methodist Church.

Full Gospel

Another term that may be helpful to understand is the term *full gospel*. This refers to churches and denominations who preach the full gospel as opposed to just a part of the gospel. In other words, they believe that spiritual gifts, healings and miracles are available today and that Jesus is still doing today what He did in the Gospels and in the book of Acts. They don't believe these things passed away with the last apostle, therefore, the *full gospel* is preached and accepted in these churches and

denominations. It's easy to see why someone who truly believes this way would not be comfortable in a church that preaches the day of miracles has passed.

My Testimony

I heard about the gift of the Holy Spirit around 1978, and at that time, I was very hungry for more of God. The more I heard about this experience the more I wanted it. My aunt and uncle visited us from Texas and shared more with my family about the Holy Spirit, and at that time, my parents were baptized in the Holy Spirit. The change in their lives was dramatic, and this made me hungry to the point of desperation. I prayed and prayed to be filled with the Holy Spirit but seemed to get nowhere. I had very little experience in receiving from God by faith, and I didn't know anyone in my hometown who could help. I continued to pray with no results until the next year.

In the summer of 1979, my dad and I traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, to attend the Full Gospel Businessmen's World Convention. This meeting changed my life. I was only 15 years of age at the time, and I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues more than anything else in the world.

All the leading Charismatic ministers in the nation were speaking at this convention. There were people who had traveled to this meeting from all over the world, and the number of attendees was larger than the

population of my hometown of Malden, Missouri. We had no idea what was in store, but it was like heaven on Earth.

Meetings were held day and night. During the day, I attended the adult meetings, but each night, there were youth meetings on the top floor of a downtown hotel. Being only 15, I attended the nightly youth meetings. The youth speaker for the week was Norvel Hayes. He was a Christian businessman who had just begun his preaching ministry. On July 4, 1979, Brother Norvel had a service for us that was specifically designed for those who wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. On this night, he invited two special guests to share on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The guests were Brother Norvel's friends, John Osteen and Kenneth Hagin.

After each of these men shared on the gift of the Holy Spirit, they gave an altar call, and around 80 teenagers, myself included, went forward to receive. We were packed together in the front of that ballroom, and after a couple of minutes of instruction, the Holy Ghost fell just like He did in the book of Acts, and we were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues.

It was glorious! No one laid hands on us, and no one prayed for us individually. It was as if a wave of glory suddenly swept over the altar and we were caught up in the presence of God. I had never spoken in tongues before that day, but I have never stopped since! Other than my salvation, that was, and still is, the greatest experience of my life. Today, after all these years, I wouldn't trade the gift of the Holy Spirit for

anything else in the world!

The next day, one of the ministers advertised an impromptu baptismal service at the Marriot Hotel swimming pool in downtown New Orleans. Growing up Methodist, I had been christened as a baby but never baptized in water. I knew the Lord wanted me to be baptized after reading about the significance of water baptism in the Bible, so my dad took me to the swimming pool. We were very late and the baptismal service was over. The minister was ready to leave as we showed up. I asked if he would baptize me and informed him that I wasn't dressed for the occasion. It was no problem whatsoever. He encouraged me to jump into the water in my street clothes, and I was baptized forthwith!

When my dad and I returned home at the end of that week, I had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and baptized in water, and my life was changed forever. Within a year, I became a children's church pastor, and I've been preaching the Word of God ever since.

The gift of the Holy Spirit truly enables every believer to do what they're called to do. It enables you to be the Christian God has called you to be. After over 40 years, I can't imagine living life without this amazing gift!

Chapter 3

An Endowment of Power

After my entire family received the gift of the Holy Spirit, we tried to go back to our denominational church, but it was evident we just didn't fit in there anymore. Something had happened to us. We saw things differently, and we worshipped differently. It was never discussed, but I think the church leadership felt the same way about us.

So, rather than cause any problems, we knew it was time to find a new church to attend. After searching our area, we found a new startup church made up of people who had received the same gift and had the same experience we had.

The church we joined began meeting in a storefront building, just as literally hundreds of other churches did in the late '70s and early '80s—attended by people like us who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and were no longer fulfilled in their former churches.

I'll never forget those services. Worship was led by a piano player who played an old, upright piano—no orchestra and no backup singers. The words were put on transparencies and projected onto a screen on the wall

by an overhead projector. We would sing those charismatic, Word-based choruses with all of our hearts, and it was liberating. We clapped our hands as loud as we could!

Growing up in the Methodist church, we didn't clap to the music, lift our hands or shout "Amen!" or "Hallelujah!" We now loved that kind of worship and wanted to be in church all the time. In those days, regular church services were held every Sunday morning and evening and every Wednesday night. I went to church every time the doors were open, as well as attending seminars and conferences around the country. I skipped school several times to go to special meetings in other cities.

The sermons in nearly every service lasted an hour or more. It's as if we couldn't get enough. We read books, listened to teachings on cassettes and on radio and television—wherever we could find them.

I grew by leaps and bounds, and within that first year, my pastor asked me to teach the children. He didn't have a children's pastor, so he said, "Would you teach the children this Sunday?" Not knowing it would go beyond one week, I agreed.

I began teaching in children's church at 16 years of age and continued until I went to Bible school at 18. I taught those children everything I knew. After several weeks, I'll never forget walking out of that storefront building one Sunday after church, and I knew on that day that I wanted to teach God's Word for the rest of my life. Those were very special days.

I spent much time praying and preparing to teach and preach the Word, and it's a habit that I have maintained ever since. The baptism in the Holy Spirit opens the door to the supernatural in your life. It opens the door to the gifts of the Spirit. And if you're called to ministry, it empowers you to fulfill that ministry by giving you the tools you need to develop your gift.

John the Baptist said:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

—Matthew 3:11

I like the term *fire* when referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit because it gives us the idea that it's something powerful, burning and all-consuming.

When we were born again, most of us were aware of a peace we had never known before and a supernatural love that was so real that many have said the grass looked greener and the sky seemed bluer. We suddenly became aware of the peace of God and the love of God in our hearts. But when a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, they are more aware of God's power.

“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” This is not just a feeling; it’s real fire. Sometimes you feel it, and sometimes you don’t, but there is power that comes into you that was not there before.

Another way to describe this gift is *an endowment of power*. Jesus said, *“You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come up on you,”* (Acts 1:8). He’s saying there’s going to be more of this power on you and in you.

In fact, Jesus told them in Luke 24:49 (KJV), *“...tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”*

At this same time, He told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mk. 16:15). That’s a big task for a few hundred people, and you would think if they were going to accomplish it, they would need to get started as quickly as possible. But the first thing Jesus said to do was “Wait.” He cautioned them to tarry or wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high before they went out to win the world.

The disciples were already born again when Jesus told them to tarry for the gift of the Holy Spirit. People who are born again don’t automatically have this experience. There are many good, Christian people who may take offense to this, but just because you’re born again and you’re a good Christian and you love God does not mean that you’ve received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus clearly told this small group of believers to wait in Jerusalem until they were endued with power. Salvation makes one a child of God, but

it's the gift of the Holy Spirit that makes a person a witness. Look at Acts 1:8 again:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

They did what Jesus said and they were not disappointed:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:2-4

The change in their lives was so dramatic that Peter, who had a few weeks before denied he knew Jesus, preached a marvelous salvation message to everyone present. This endowment of power made Peter a witness, and it will make you a witness!

When I first heard about this gift as a young Methodist boy, I wanted it! I didn't have any reluctance whatsoever.

One of the blessings of being brought up in the Methodist church is they never preached against anybody or anything. So, when I heard about the gift of the Holy Spirit, my heart leapt inside me. And my head didn't try to talk me out of it because I'd never heard that miracles had passed away or that speaking in tongues is of the devil or many of the other lies that were being spread concerning this wonderful gift.

I wanted to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with all my heart, which is very important. In fact, the first step to receiving this gift is to desire it. Once you have the desire, the fulfillment will surely come!

Chapter 4

Coming Out of the Closet!

Some Charismatic, Spirit-filled believers are so concerned about offending someone that they're holding back the very thing people need in their lives.

In many instances, if we would just be open about the gift of the Holy Spirit, it would allow others the chance to experience the same thing we have, and they may be more interested than you think. We should not err on the side of caution when it comes to sharing spiritual things.

A hunger for God exists in the heart of every person whether they realize it or not or have ever acted on it. Everyone has a hunger for the supernatural. God designed the baptism in the Holy Spirit to be one way He satisfies that craving. It's literally the doorway into the supernatural.

Not long after being filled with the Holy Spirit and becoming a children's pastor at our full-gospel church, I began to meet with the pastor and another friend or two for a prayer meeting every Saturday night. I loved this time of prayer and looked forward to it each week because, not only did it bless me personally, but it also helped me

prepare for my Sunday morning service with the children.

One of the guys who often came to this weekly prayer meeting invited a mutual friend of ours named Clifford. Although he was a Christian, Clifford didn't attend church regularly. He didn't know anything about the Pentecostal experience. He certainly didn't know anything about speaking in tongues, and we were going to have a prayer meeting for an hour and a half to two hours where we were going to primarily pray in tongues.

Cliff went to my high school; he was in my class, and I wasn't interested in him going to the prayer meeting and being horrified by what we were doing. So, I met with him, and I said, "Look, Cliff, you really don't want to go. We're going to go to church, and we're going to pray.

And Clifford said, "Uh, well, I don't mind praying."

I said, "No, Cliff, you don't understand. We're going to pray for a long time. It's going to be mostly a prayer meeting." I thought I could talk him out of it.

Cliff said, "I don't mind. I want to go."

I said, "Cliff, no. You really don't want to go. It's not going to be a time that you're going to enjoy."

He said, "No, I will. I want to go."

I couldn't talk him out of it.

As we drove to the little town where my church was, all I could think of was how much damage this was going to do to my reputation. I was so concerned Clifford was going to be frightened and think we were crazy. I thought he would tell all my friends I was a nut and that I was in a cult because we spoke in tongues. I was really concerned it wasn't going to go well.

When we arrived, I took my pastor aside and said, "Look, Cliff doesn't know anything about spiritual things, he doesn't pray in tongues and has probably never heard of it, so let's just not pray tonight."

And the pastor said, "Oh, it'll be fine."

I thought, *Yeah, for you it will be, but he's going to ruin my reputation!* I'm embarrassed to admit it today, but at that time, that's where I was in my thinking. We got ready to pray, and the pastor said, "Cliff, we're going to pray tonight for about an hour or so. Have you ever prayed in tongues? We're going to pray in tongues."

And Cliff said, "No, I've never prayed in tongues."

I thought, *Oh no. Here we go.*

And the pastor said, "Well, would you like to?"

“Yes,” Cliff replied.

I thought, *This isn't going to work. He can't just come up here and pray in tongues for an hour like we do. I mean, he doesn't have any experience. He doesn't know anything about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.* I sought this experience for months and months before I received, and I learned everything I could about it before I ever spoke in tongues.

The pastor gave Cliff a short explanation of the gift of the Holy Spirit and led him in a simple prayer. Cliff lifted his hands, and he started praying in tongues! We had our prayer meeting for an hour and a half—all of us, including Cliff! We all prayed in tongues and worshipped God. Let me tell you, it changed Clifford's life, and it changed my attitude!

I didn't think it was going to go well at all, but it went better than I ever dreamed. Cliff rarely ever missed another Saturday night prayer meeting! In fact, Cliff and I are friends to this day. Over 40 years later, he's still Spirit-filled and active in his church. He shares the word of God and is a great witness in his community. And it all started that day in a prayer meeting when he learned about something he previously knew nothing about. Rather than running from it, he embraced it, and it changed his life!

We shouldn't be concerned about offending people over the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. Let me put it this way: We live

in a day when everyone else has come out of the closet with their beliefs and lifestyles, no matter how controversial they are. The closet is empty except for a few Charismatic Pentecostals who are afraid they're going to offend somebody!

We need to come out of the closet and say, "Yes, I believe in the supernatural and the gifts of the Spirit. I believe in a God who still does miracles today, and I believe in being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues."

You may be the very person God is calling to share this experience with your friends and relatives. Some of them may already know about it and want to know more; others may not be interested at all. That's fine, but we should be sensitive to the people around us like Paul was in Acts 19. He saw some disciples, and he said, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" (Acts 19:2)

What a great question!

There are Christians who love God and serve Him with all their might, yet they're struggling. We should be looking for opportunities to ask the question, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" When Paul asked this question, those men answered by saying, "We didn't know there was a Holy Spirit." The people you ask may say the same thing and you can explain it to them. As you become familiar with the scriptures we are covering in this book, you'll be able to show them from the Bible what a valuable gift this is and how to receive it.

Chapter 5

A Separate Experience

Salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are not the same experience. Some have taught that unless you speak in tongues you aren't going to heaven. That's not what the Bible teaches, and that's not what I am saying. Salvation comes first, and it is the most important experience of all. A person can be Christian and yet never receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues. This gift is available but not mandatory. In John 4, we see Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. He uses this instance to illustrate the gift of salvation.

He said:

“If you knew the gift of God and who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would’ve asked Him, and He would’ve given you living water. ... Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

—John 4:10, 13

Jesus is talking here about salvation. *Everlasting life* is another term we use when we refer to receiving Jesus or being saved. He is comparing salvation to a fountain or a well of water as it's translated in the King James Version.

Let's compare this with what Jesus said in John 7, just three chapters later. He is speaking on the Feast day, and He said in verses 37-38:

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

The King James says *“out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”* Clearly, a river is different than a well. Both of these examples use water, but one is water in a well or a small fountain, which would indicate more of a personal experience. And then here in John 7, He speaks of rivers flowing out.

That's quite different—both contain water, but rivers would have more volume and produce more power. And rather than this water being in you as a well, *it's flowing out of you.* That's a great way to illustrate the difference between salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures go on to explain that these rivers of water are the result of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit:

But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

—John 7:39

We can be certain this is an illustration or picture of the baptism in the Holy Spirit because it says, “*the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive.*”

If you’ve been Spirit-filled, you’ve experienced this first hand; you know what it means to have rivers of living water flowing out of your innermost being. This experience is subsequent to and separate from the new birth. When a Christian receives the gift of the Spirit, they are more conscious of the Spirit of God, the spirit world and the power of God than ever before. If you’re hungry for more of God and you’ve never received the gift of the Holy Spirit, this is what you are hungry for.

It is possible to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit immediately after receiving salvation, but it is important to understand it is a separate experience. Let’s refer to an example of this in Acts 10 where we read about a man named Cornelius and his household. Cornelius had heard about the gift of salvation from an angel who instructed him to send for Peter. Peter came to his house and shared a very simple gospel message, and then something amazing happened. The Bible says:

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell

upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

—Acts 10:44-46

Cornelius and his guests believed the gospel and received salvation on the spot. Then they were immediately filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with tongues. As these rivers of living water flowed out of them, they spoke in tongues and praised and magnified God. This experience causes the well of water to turn into rivers of water and allows believers to worship God in ways that were impossible before.

On the night I received the Holy Spirit in 1979, eighty young people were filled with the Spirit at once, very similar to what happened at Cornelius' house. The Holy Spirit fell and we began to pray and praise and sing. It was a glorious time!

There was a girl there who said to me, "I haven't received the Holy Spirit. I want to receive this gift."

So, I was trying to help her, and I said, "Just ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit." We prayed and prayed and nothing happened. So, I found one of the leaders, and I said, "Hey, she wants to be filled with the Spirit, and we've prayed and can't seem to get anywhere."

He looked at her and said, “Have you ever been born again?”

And she replied, “No.”

He just stopped right there and shared Jesus with her. They prayed the salvation prayer and immediately prayed for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and she received instantly!

That’s when I learned that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate gift—in addition to the gift of salvation. They are two separate experiences. This means a person doesn’t have to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues to be saved or to go to heaven but to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, they must be saved.

There are many, many Christians who have never received the gift of the Holy Spirit. They have the well of water springing up into everlasting life but not the rivers of water.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is an endowment of power. It’s more of what you already have as a Christian. It’s not another god but the same God, the same Holy Spirit but in a greater measure. This fresh impartation of power helps us live for God and overcome the challenges of life. It simply makes more power available.

In Acts 9, we read where the apostle Paul received this gift, and we’ll see again that it’s an experience separate from salvation. Saul of Tarsus (who

became the apostle Paul) was on the way to Damascus to persecute Christians when he was arrested by the Lord. Suddenly he saw a bright light.

Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

—Acts 9:4-5a

Saul confessed Jesus as his Lord and was saved on the road, but he was blind for three days and needed another experience. He needed to go further; he needed to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus spoke to a man named Ananias and said:

... "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

—Acts 9:15-17

Ananias called him "Brother Saul," confirming he was already a

Christian when Ananias arrived. Ananias then laid hands on Saul and he received his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

This agrees with what Peter teaches us in Acts 2 where he said:

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

—Acts 2:38

So, it’s a subsequent experience in addition to and separate from the new birth. Some people are saved for many years before they hear about the gift of the Holy Spirit and receive it. Others are saved and filled with the Spirit immediately afterward like Cornelius and his household, but salvation always comes first.

Look again at Acts 19 where we see Paul witnessing to some disciples:

He (Paul) said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ

Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

—Acts 19:2-5 (parentheses mine)

Paul thought these disciples were Christians who hadn't been Spirit-filled. It turned out they only knew of John's baptism. They didn't know about Jesus and all that He had done. In other words, they hadn't heard the gospel. Even though John the Baptist had told them the Messiah was coming, they didn't know He had come and that salvation was available.

After Paul shared the gospel with them and they were saved, they needed to be baptized as Christians, which happened in verse 5: “*when they heard this, (the gospel) they were baptized in the name of Jesus.*” The Bible tells us that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. So, they were saved in verse 5. Then, Acts 19:6 says:

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit after they were saved.

We see the same truth illustrated in Acts 8:

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached

Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

—Acts 8:5-8

This is a revival. Philip preached Christ to them and they heeded his words. It says there were multitudes, so Phillip had a good number of people who were saved in this meeting. However, no one had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice what happens next:

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, Who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

—Acts 8:14-17

So, once again, you have a group of people who heard the gospel, they believed on Jesus and were baptized. So, according to the Scriptures, they were saved, but the Holy Spirit hadn't fallen on them. Peter and John laid hands on these new believers, and they received the Holy Spirit. This is just one more example where we see that the gift of the

Holy Spirit is separate from, and in addition to, salvation.

The Bible doesn't tell us why salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are two separate experiences. But because of this, there are many Christians who are saved yet haven't and may never receive this gift. Some have never heard about it, and others just cannot accept the fact that speaking in tongues is for us today. So, although they have accepted Jesus, they aren't interested in this supernatural gift.

In my opinion, these gifts are separate because God doesn't want anyone to miss heaven because they have a problem with speaking in tongues. But if you're like me, when I found out there was more, I wanted it. I wanted what they received in the upper room. I wanted what the apostle Paul had; I wanted what Cornelius and his household received. I wanted what Phillip's converts experienced. In each instance, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. I may not have received as quickly as some, but I stayed with it until I got it. God had to take me all the way to New Orleans to a national convention so I could be in an atmosphere where I could believe Him.

If you too are hungry for this experience, remember what Jesus said, "*Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened to you.*" If you've been praying for the Holy Spirit and are having trouble receiving this gift, don't give up. Continue to persist and believe God, and He will help you receive the things you desire.

Chapter 6

How to Receive

When I pray with people to receive the Holy Spirit, there are two scriptures I like to read to prepare them to ask in faith. The first one is Acts 2:38, which we've read. But let's look at it again.

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Lest anyone should say, "Well, I don't think it's for us today," we can see that Peter clearly taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for us today. Peter said, *"the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

This includes believers today. When you're a child of God, all His gifts and promises belong to you. Nowhere in the Bible does it say this gift or any other spiritual gift ceased with the last apostle! What it does say is this promise is to you and your children and to all that are afar off.

It's important to show those who want to receive the Holy Spirit that

this gift is available today. Or to make it more personal, if you're a Christian, this gift is for you right now.

The other scripture I like to read is in Luke 11, where Jesus said:

"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

Jesus gives us very clear instructions in this verse on how to receive the Holy Spirit. First, He points out that to pray this prayer, God must be your Father. As we have already shown, this gift is available to Christians—being born again is the only prerequisite. Second, you must ask for this gift; it doesn't come just because you are a child of God. So, He emphasizes the importance of asking and God's willingness to answer by saying, *"how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."* He does the giving, and you do the asking. And third, you can be sure that you are going to receive what you ask for.

I've met some people who were afraid to ask God for the Holy Spirit because they thought they might get a different spirit. Not so! God is not going to give you some other kind of spirit. If you ask God for the Holy Spirit, He's going to give you the Holy Spirit. You're not opening yourself up to evil spirits. When you go to your Father in the name of

Jesus and ask for a gift He's offered you, you're simply following His instructions. You're doing what He told you to do, and you can be confident that He will do what He said He would do.

I preached my first sermon to adults when I was 16. I was the children's church pastor at the time, and we normally had the kid's service in another part of the church separate from the adults. But this particular week, the pastor asked me to preach in the main service. That Sunday, we brought all the children out into the sanctuary, and I preached to the whole church. I was petrified!

I taught on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and gave an invitation to those who wanted to receive. Twenty-two children came forward to be filled with the Spirit. My assistant and I took them into another room to pray with them, and in a few minutes, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues.

I was thrilled to be used as an instrument of God to help those children receive what had blessed me so much. That was over 40 years ago, and since then, I have been privileged to pray with thousands of people all over the world to receive the Holy Spirit by using the following four steps.

If you would like to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit today, follow these steps for yourself; or if you are interested in helping other people receive, you can take them through these same steps. They will work for individuals as well as large groups.

Step One: Salvation

The person or persons must be saved to be a candidate for the gift of the Holy Spirit, so go ahead and pray this prayer first:

Lord Jesus, I believe you died for my sins. I believe God raised You from the dead, and now my sins are paid for. You're the risen Savior, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And Jesus, I accept what You did for me, and I ask You to come into my heart, forgive me of all my sins and be my Lord. Right now, I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord.

This is what we call the *prayer of salvation*. And whether I have one person who has come to receive or a large number of people, I always pray this prayer with them first.

Now that you are a Christian, you are ready for the second step.

Step Two: Ask the Father for the Holy Spirit.

First, read Luke 11:13:

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!"

Now pray the following prayer in faith:

Father, I have seen in the Scriptures where You promised to give the gift of the Holy Spirit to your children. I want to receive this gift. You said in Luke 11:13 that You're a good father, and You know how to give good gifts to Your children. It says, how much more will You give the Holy Spirit to me when I ask. Well, I'm asking for this gift—the same gift the disciples received in the upper room. I'm asking You to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I have Your Word that You will give me what I ask for when I pray. So right now, I believe I have received this gift.

Now that you have prayed, it's time to act as if you believe you have received what you asked for. If you went to a restaurant and ordered a cheeseburger, would they give you a cheeseburger? Would you have to plead and beg and roll around on the floor and cry? No, you wouldn't. If the local restaurant can give you what you ask for, then certainly God can. So, if you asked God for the Holy Spirit, you can be sure He heard you and He has answered your prayer.

This leads us to the next step.

Step Three: Thank God for giving you the Holy Spirit.

The next thing to do is begin to thank God for giving you the Holy Spirit. If you prayed that prayer with me, begin to thank Him right now.

Say:

Thank You, Father, for filling me with the Holy Spirit. I desired this gift, and I have asked You for it by faith. Now, I thank You for filling me with Your Spirit. Thank You for this precious gift, for rivers of living water, for the endowment of power. Thank You for doing what You said You'd do and for answering my prayer today, in Jesus' name.

After you've taken plenty of time to thank God for answering your prayer, you're ready for the last step.

Step Four: Begin to speak in other tongues.

The Bible says in Acts 2:4, *"they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak with other tongues."* This is the part that's most misunderstood, but it is a supernatural experience not to be missed.

If you have prayed for and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, you can expect to begin to speak in tongues just like the disciples did in the upper room.

You can expect to speak in tongues the same way Cornelius and his household did when they were filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 10. We see in Acts 19, when Paul prayed for certain disciples, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues as well. If you have received the same gift, you can expect the same results.

You've already praised and thanked God for what He has done for you in English. Now, close your eyes and begin to speak out of your spirit—not your head, but your spirit—whatever sounds or syllables you sense down on the inside; just go ahead and speak them out loud. You have to do this by faith. And as you begin to give voice to what is on the inside, the words will form, and you'll begin to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives you utterance.

Take time to praise Him in the spirit, but be sure not to speak in English or whatever your known language is. You can't speak in English and tongues at the same time. Stop speaking in English and begin to speak sounds or syllables that originate from your spirit. Speak them out of your mouth, and give God something to work with.

As you do, you'll find yourself praying in a prayer language to God. It's supernatural. This goes beyond the scope of your mind. You won't know the words. You won't understand what you're saying, but God will. It is a supernatural way to pray.

And if you have trouble doing this by yourself, call our ministry or another ministry that believes in the gift of the Holy Spirit and talk to a prayer counselor. Allow them to pray with you and give you personal instruction. Better yet, find a church where they preach these things, tell them you want to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and allow them to help you and pray with you.

As I said, I struggled to receive this gift by myself. It helped me to get

with people who believed and practiced these things.

If you don't seem to receive instantly or aren't immediately able to speak in tongues, don't be discouraged. I've prayed with many people who seemingly saw no results and returned the next day to tell me that after they had gone home and gone to bed, they woke up in the middle of the night praying in tongues.

You may say, "Well, why is that?" It's because speaking in tongues flows from your spirit. Sometimes people's minds are so active they're not able to shut them off and pray out of their spirits. Some people are quicker to make the connection than others, but all of us can receive and flow in this gift. You should definitely make it a point to stay with it until you make the connection and you're able to pray in other tongues. Once you do, you can pray in tongues any time you like!

Paul said, "*I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding,*" (1 Cor. 14:15). That means you can pray in tongues whenever you choose and as much as you choose. I encourage you to use your prayer language. Take time to build yourself up by praying in other tongues. We will deal with this subject more thoroughly in the following chapters.

If you read this chapter, prayed the prayer and have received the Holy Spirit today, write or call us and let us know. We would love to hear your testimony!

Chapter 7

They Spoke with Tongues

I want to take some time to look at the origin of tongues and prove from the Scriptures that this phenomenon is not the product of religion nor the idea of man. Speaking in tongues is an experience God wanted believers to enjoy. We can see in the events leading up to the first Pentecostal service that the Lord Himself was urging His followers to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, and although they may not have realized it before-hand, this included speaking in other tongues.

In Luke 24, we see the command Jesus gave to the disciples to go back to the city of Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

—Luke 24:49-52

What a sight that would've been—to have witnessed Jesus' ascension!

The disciples did exactly what Jesus told them to do—they went back to Jerusalem and waited for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the promise.

We see another account of His ascension in the book of Acts, also written by Luke, that includes a few more details:

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

—Acts 1:4-5

It seems as though they were not as interested in receiving the Holy Spirit as they should have been because they began to ask Jesus about other things:

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority."

—Acts 1:6-7

Jesus was emphasizing the importance of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and they wanted to know about the new kingdom and their roles in it. But Jesus got them back on track:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

—Acts 1:8

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room...

—Acts 1:9-13a

The disciples followed Jesus’ instructions and returned to Jerusalem to wait for the promise. In verse 14, it says, *“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication....”* They were having daily prayer

meetings and waiting for the promise of God in the upper room.

We know that Passover was celebrated on the eve of Jesus' crucifixion, and Pentecost was to be celebrated 50 days later. We also know that Jesus showed Himself alive for 40 days after His resurrection and before He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:3). This means when they went back to Jerusalem to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, it was around seven days before the day of Pentecost. They didn't know how long they would have to wait because Jesus didn't tell them the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the day of Pentecost, so they had no idea whether it would be a week or a month. They were just told to wait. They also had no idea what this promise would be like when it came. There had never been a Spirit-filled church or a Pentecostal service before this time. They didn't know exactly what they were waiting for, and they probably had no idea they would speak in tongues. All they knew was they were commanded to wait until they received the gift.

In Acts 2:1, we see what happened next:

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

—Acts 2:1-4

In this initial outpouring of the Spirit, they were filled with the Spirit and they spoke in other tongues. The meeting, the experience and the timing was all ordained of God. This was God's gift, and it was given by His command at a certain point in time. After this initial outpouring, we see the same thing happen time and again in the New Testament; we have more than enough examples to prove that speaking in other tongues is part of this experience. This may have been the first Pentecostal service, but it would not be the last! Services just like this have continued to this day.

Notice how this confused the people who heard them:

... everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"

—Acts 2:5-8

They heard them speaking in tongues, and some of them understood what was being said. Paul taught that when we speak in tongues, we are speaking in tongues of men and of angels, and in this case, at least some of the people heard them speak in their own languages (1 Cor. 13:1).

So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

—Acts 2:12-13

People have the same reaction to the gift of the Holy Spirit today. Some are “*amazed and perplexed*” and some mock. It’s funny; some of the most unchurched people you’ll ever meet have no problem with tongues at all. They don’t want to be judged for what they’re doing, so they’re not so quick to judge you for what you’re doing. However, there are religious people who don’t agree with speaking in tongues who are critical and attempt to discourage others from receiving this gift.

I’ve heard good, well-meaning Christians say, “Well, I’m filled with the Holy Spirit, but I don’t speak in tongues.” They seem to be happy with that, but I want the full experience.

No doubt, there is an element of mystery concerning speaking in tongues, and this is why some natural-minded people find it offensive. But there is also no doubt that the gift of the Holy Spirit, followed by the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, came from and comes from God. It may be offensive to some, but it is scriptural. Even Christ’s death on the cross is offensive to some people.

In 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul said, “*but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness.*”

So, in the same way, to some people, even some Christians, speaking in tongues is a stumbling block, and to others, it's just foolishness. Those of us who believe in being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues have been called names and mocked; we've been accused of being in cults. This is consistent with what we read here in Acts 2—some people rejected it, others mocked it and some people accepted it.

It says, "*they were amazed and perplexed.*" Signs and wonders are designed to make people wonder. God's ways are higher than our ways, and tongues is one of those things that just doesn't make sense to the rational, logical mind. It can be a stumbling block, but as for me, I want what they had. If they got filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues.

Some have said that speaking in tongues is of God, but it's not for us today. They believe this phenomenon has passed away. To prove that, they would have to interview everyone in the world to be certain that no one alive is currently speaking in tongues. All I have to do to prove that tongues is for today is to find one person who speaks in tongues!

There are millions of people on the Earth today who speak in tongues. *Christianity Today* estimates there are over 500 million Charismatic Christians in the world today who believe in and practice these gifts—specifically praying and speaking in other tongues. So, it is for today!

Jesus said:

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;”

—Mark 16:17

Tongues is one of the signs that is supposed to follow those who believe. Then when it happens, people want to reject and criticize it or say it's not God, it's not for today.

The disciples of Jesus were having a Holy Ghost service in the upper room, and to the outsiders, it looked like they were being emotional, disorderly and unruly. It was not church as usual! They finally accused these newly baptized believers of being drunk! So, Peter stood up to set the record straight:

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

—Acts 2:14-16

Peter said, “They're not drunk. It's only nine o'clock in the morning! This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.” In other words, “We've all been waiting for the promise in the book of Joel to come to pass. Today it has, and this is what it looks like.”

John Osteen, a wonderful, full-gospel, non-denominational pastor, was originally a Baptist minister. He was filled with the Holy Spirit in the early days of the Charismatic renewal and began to speak in other tongues. He was subsequently excommunicated from the Baptist church. He said, “We had been singing this hymn for years: O, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer’s praise.” He went on to say, “They said they wanted a thousand more tongues to praise Him. I got one more, and they kicked me out!”

The same series of events that happened on the day of Pentecost has been repeated over and over again throughout church history. We have to decide which side of history we want to be on. The critics can laugh and mock all they want, but I choose to be on the side with the disciples and followers of Jesus. I want to receive all God has for me.

I had a funny experience along these lines many years ago. A pastor friend of mine invited me to go to Israel with him. He organized a tour of the Holy Land for his church members every year, and this year, I decided to join them. It was a fantastic experience. I really enjoyed seeing the actual places I had read about in the Bible, and I highly recommend these tours for Christians if at all possible. One of the locations we visited on this trip was called *the upper room*. Obviously, it was not the original upper room but according to our tour guide, it was very similar to the upper room we see in Acts 2, and it was in the same vicinity.

The evening before our visit to “the upper room,” my pastor friend who

was leading the group said, “I want to have a service for our group in the upper room, if we go early maybe no one else will be there and we can have our own private meeting. “

Early the next morning as we left the hotel on the tour bus, he asked if I would lead the service. There were somewhere between 30 and 40 of us, and when we arrived, we climbed the stairs and entered the upper room. They immediately turned this informal meeting over to me, and I began to read in Acts 2, “*When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven...*,” and as I read, the Holy Ghost began to fall, and our group was getting blessed. If you’ve never been in a Holy Ghost service, find one and go. It’s an amazing, wonderful, supernatural experience!

I kept reading, and the Spirit kept moving. There were people praising God out loud in English while others were praying in tongues. Some were kneeling; others were standing with their hands raised. It got so loud they couldn’t hear me, so I quit reading and watched God move on His people. It was a reenactment of the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the upper room and very special to those of us who were there.

We were all basking in the presence of God for quite some time, when suddenly, another tour group came up the stairs. Let’s just say they weren’t full gospel because as they started to enter the room and saw what was going on, they backed into the stairwell with horrified looks on their faces! About that time, the pastor looked over at me and said, “Let’s close this down and get everybody out of here.”

Well by this time, I'd lost all control of the meeting, so I started leading people down the stairs, one or two at a time, moving our group out so the other group could come in and enjoy their tour.

While I was going up and down the stairs, I overheard the comments of these other Christians. They were saying, "They're doing this in public! How could they do this in public? It's just not proper to act like this in public!"

I didn't say anything because I was trying to be nice, but I was thinking, *What do you mean "in public?" This is the upper room. The only reason this room is on the tour is because of a meeting just like this.* They should have paid extra for the authentic demonstration! It was history repeating itself: The Holy Ghost was present, and He fell on those of us who were hungry for Him, and we all began to speak in tongues and praise and worship God. The critics arrived as well, mocking and criticizing us as we enjoyed the presence of God. These same events have been repeated countless times since the day of Pentecost. It was not our intention to speak in tongues to offend people, we just wanted more of God and the tongues came with it. Besides, what could be more appropriate in the upper room?

As I've said, there are good Christians who will say they're filled with the Holy Spirit but they don't speak in tongues. But that's not consistent with the Scriptures. When those in the Bible were filled with the Spirit, they spoke in tongues. I don't know about you, but I want what they

had!

Cornelius and his household had a similar experience in Acts 10. Cornelius was a Gentile—not a Jew nor an apostle. This is important because some say these things stopped after the last apostle died. Well, Cornelius wasn't an apostle. He was an Italian man who was a centurion, a Roman soldier. The Holy Spirit fell upon all those in his household who heard the Word, and all those who came with Peter were astonished because the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles—*“for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God...”* (Acts 10:46).

Thank God for Cornelius. His experience proves the gift of the Holy Spirit is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. If Cornelius and his house can receive the Holy Spirit just as the disciples and the apostles in the upper room did, then you and I can receive the Holy Spirit just as they did.

The Bible never says these things passed away. It doesn't say the gift of the Holy Spirit was just for the apostles.

Another example we referenced earlier is in Acts 19. Paul, talking to some disciples, asked if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed. They said they didn't know there was a Holy Spirit. Paul asked, “Into what were you baptized?” And they said into John's baptism.

Paul informed them that John baptized with a baptism of repentance,

saying they should believe on Jesus. When they heard Jesus was the Savior, they were baptized in the name of the Lord and when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

They received the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, which means the laying on of hands is a scriptural way to minister to people who want to receive this gift. These men Paul laid hands on were clearly not apostles, and this was long after the initial outpouring of the Spirit in the upper room, yet they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues.

In my experience, people who want to argue and debate over these things are not interested in receiving. They just want to win an argument. This gift is for people who are sincerely seeking God and want all that God has for them. The scriptures we have covered in this book provide an abundance of proof that the gift of the Holy Spirit is part of God's plan; it is God's will and God's gift.

On the other hand, God won't force anyone to be Spirit-filled and speak in tongues. He wouldn't do that anymore than He would force salvation on people. This gift is for those who want it.

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of

his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

—John 7:37-38

This gift will satisfy your thirst, but it is essential that *you come to Him*. He's not going to force it on you. So, it's not right for people to say, “I love God, and I have surrendered my life to Him. If there's anything else He has for me, I'm sure He'll give it to me.” That's not how it works. You are to go to God and ask.

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 (emphasis mine)

Notice, He didn't say He gives it to those who need it or to those who love Him, but *He gives it to those who ask Him*. You have to ask for it and receive it by faith.

Chapter 8

Divine Secrets

Two things happen when we pray in tongues. First, we are praying mysteries to God, and second, we are edifying ourselves. Let's take a look at the first thing first.

Paul said:

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

—1 Corinthians 14:2

The Amplified Bible says, "...in the [Holy] Spirit he utters secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the understanding]." That's such a powerful verse. When you speak in tongues, you're actually speaking secret truths to God.

One of the biggest objections people have with praying in tongues is they don't understand how it can be beneficial if the person praying doesn't know what they are saying. It's true that when someone speaks in an unknown tongue, it's unknown. First Corinthians 14:2 says, "*in the spirit he speaks mysteries,*" and a *mystery* is a truth or fact beyond natural

comprehension or beyond human knowledge. Even though the person praying may not understand what they are saying, God does, and it's a prayer to God not to men. It is a supernatural form of prayer direct from your spirit to God.

Paul goes on to say:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

—1 Corinthians 14:14-15

Paul said, “*my understanding is unfruitful.*” In other words, he doesn't know what he's saying, but his spirit is praying. “*What is the conclusion then?*” He goes on to say, “*I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit and I will also sing with the understanding.*”

It must be helpful to pray in tongues and with the understanding or he wouldn't have told us he does both.

It is also important to note that you can choose to pray in tongues, just like you can choose to pray in your known language. In my case, it would be English. I don't have to have a special anointing or unction to pray in

English. I can do it anytime I choose. I can also pray in tongues—anytime I choose.

There are some who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues during their first experience, yet they've never spoken in tongues since because they haven't felt the same power or anointing again. They think it's necessary to feel something to speak in tongues. The truth is, you don't have to have any more feelings to pray in the Spirit than you have to pray with your understanding. Paul said, "*I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding.*" The same thing is true with singing in the Spirit; you don't have to have a special anointing or unction to sing in the Spirit. You can sing and praise God whenever you want to.

Whether you're praying in the Spirit or singing in the Spirit, you can know that you're doing it well. In verse 17, Paul says, "*For you indeed give thanks well...*" He's saying when you pray in tongues, you're praying effectively. If you're praising God in tongues, you're doing it well. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is giving you the words to express things that are in your heart. He is helping you to say what needs to be said.

It's harder to explain these things than it is to actually do them and enjoy the benefits. But I'd like to take a little time to help those who may be struggling with the mysterious aspect of speaking in tongues.

There are thoughts and desires in your spirit that are beyond your ability to express. For instance, the real you has no problem at all believing that

God is and believing that He has always been and will always be. Your mind would say, but how's that possible? How could He have always been? Doesn't everything have a beginning? There are a lot of things your spirit embraces wholeheartedly that your mind just can't understand. No Christian can accurately or fully express their love for God with their own human language. We are incapable of fully expressing the infinite desires of our eternal spirits with our finite minds. Praying in tongues is a way to bypass the mind and its limitations.

When we pray with our understanding, we can only pray out what we understand and have the vocabulary to express, but when we shift over and begin to pray in the Spirit, we bypass our minds and our prayers are unlimited.

The Holy Spirit can give us utterance to pray about things we're not aware of—things in the future that we don't yet know. He can help us pray perfect prayers about different situations in the present—challenges we're facing, traps the enemy has laid and things that are needed in our lives or in the lives of others. Many times, we really don't know the best way to pray. But when we pray in other tongues, we pray perfect prayers that deal with matters of importance whether we are aware of them or not, and these prayers perfectly express our heart's desires to God.

Praying in other tongues allows us to pray for people we don't know in parts of the world we've never been. In fact, we may never know many of the things we're praying out in tongues, unless the Lord wants to reveal them. Either way, it's important to understand that when we are praying

in the Spirit, we are praying effective, Spirit-led, perfect prayers.

Romans 8:26 says it much better than I can:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We only know so much through our own intellect, so the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, limitations and ignorance—*with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Groanings could also be interpreted *other speech*. In other words, the Spirit will help make intercession for and through us with “other speech.” The groanings mentioned here can refer to literal groanings or this could also apply to speaking in other tongues. There are times when you yield to the Holy Spirit and as you begin to express what’s down on the inside, it comes out as a groan or a sigh. Just give expression to that. This is supernatural cooperation with God that goes beyond the mind.

If you’ve never prayed in tongues, I encourage you to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and take time to pray in other tongues. Don’t allow your mind to talk you out of this experience. As Paul said, in situations where we don’t know exactly how or what to pray, the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. But He can’t help us pray if

we don't spend time in prayer.

It is a privilege to work together with the Holy Spirit while praying out what the Word calls "mysteries." One of the definitions of *mystery* is a *secret*.

God has lots of divine secrets—hidden things He might want you to pray about without revealing the mystery. You can do this by praying in tongues. Praying this way allows your spirit to truly dominate your mind. I would encourage you, if you've not done it before, to take 15 to 30 minutes and just pray in other tongues.

Setting a specific length of time causes you to discipline yourself to do it. If you only pray when you feel like it and stop when you feel like it, you're probably not going to pray as much as you should. I like to set a time of 30 minutes or an hour or more, and I'll stay in my prayer room, pray and seek God for that amount of time. Many days, I stay longer than planned. God's not counting minutes and doesn't require this, and I'm not earning points with God by praying a certain length of time. But the benefits of spending time regularly praying in tongues are tremendous.

I'm sure there have been times when you've been praying, talking to God, and you just don't seem to have the words. For example, it's impossible for us to put into words how much we love God. If you're saved and a child of God, you love God more than words can say. Now, you can say it in other tongues and fully express your deepest desires,

thoughts and feelings!

We shouldn't *only* pray in tongues, but it should be part of our prayer lives. It's a way to stay in constant communion with God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit opens the door to the supernatural in the life of a believer. We become more aware of what's on the inside of us, in our spirits, than ever before. In John 7:37-38, speaking of this gift, Jesus said those who received the gift of the Holy Spirit would have rivers of living water flowing out of their belly or innermost being. These rivers include speaking in tongues but are not limited to speaking in tongues. At times, there are rivers of praise or rivers of laughter. Sometimes there may be intense yearnings that can best be expressed with groanings or weeping. The Holy Spirit will help you become more sensitive to that which is in your spirit and assist you in giving voice to those things.

Thank God there is now a way to pray divine secrets to our Father. If you're concerned about a person or situation in your life, take it to God in prayer and then pray in other tongues. There are only so many ways you can say, "God help us" or "God change it." But by praying in other tongues, you can pray a complete, accurate, holy and perfect prayer because the prayers are being articulated by the Holy Spirit Himself!

Jesus said the Holy Spirit is our Helper, and this is one of the ways He helps us.

There has been much division and misunderstanding concerning this gift since the day of Pentecost, but God didn't give us this gift to cause people to take sides or to argue and debate over it. He gave it to us to help us and it must have been necessary or God wouldn't have given it to the Church. It was Jesus who commanded the disciples to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

When I was a youth pastor, I saw nearly all my youth receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. After sharing with them many of the same teachings I have included in this book, they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in other tongues just like in the book of Acts. We didn't intend to cause division or do these things to be different; we were just following the Scriptures.

Through a mutual friend, another youth pastor in the area heard about me and wanted to meet. I thought he just wanted to fellowship. I knew he didn't believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues, but I wasn't going to let that keep me from fellowshiping with him. I was pretty isolated in the little town where I lived, and I was looking forward to possibly making a new friend.

He came over to my apartment; we sat down to visit, and it wasn't five minutes into the conversation when he began talking about how tongues is not for today. I thought, *You know if you don't want to believe it, don't believe it, but don't try to take something away from me! I was okay with agreeing to disagree, but he was determined to talk me out of this blessing.*

We went back and forth, and finally, I just said, “Look, brother, you’ve come to the wrong place. You’re telling me that speaking in tongues is not for today, and maybe it’s not *for you* today, but this morning before you got here, I got up and prayed in other tongues for an hour. It wasn’t a figment of my imagination. I wasn’t making it up. I literally prayed in tongues for an hour today. So, I know for a fact speaking in tongues *is* for today. You know, if you want to argue whether it’s for *tomorrow*, that’s another debate, but I know it’s for today.”

There’s a saying: He who has an argument is always at the mercy of one who has an experience. There was absolutely no way he could talk me out of something I knew I had. Finally, before we parted ways, I said, “Look, you don’t think I’m stupid or that I’m an idiot, do you? Do you think I don’t have any sense at all?”

He said, “No, I don’t think you’re.... You’re not an idiot. You’re not stupid.”

I said, “Well, do you think I have enough sense to know when something is helping me and when something is hurting me? If I took poison, would I know that was hurting me?”

And he said, “Well, yeah.”

I said, “Well, wouldn’t I know if something’s helping me?”

And he said, “Well, yeah. You should know that.”

I said, “Well, I’m telling you as a friend that I spoke in tongues for an hour today, and it helped me. It’s not my imagination.

It helped; it didn’t hurt me. It helped me—positively helped me—and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit has changed my life. And furthermore, if I’m right about this, and I am, then you are missing out on one of the greatest gifts God has given to humanity. And I don’t want to see you miss out on this wonderful gift.”

We parted ways, and of course, he didn’t talk me out of it, and I don’t think I talked him into it. Over the years, I’ve made it a point not to argue with people just to try to win a debate, but I’m always ready to talk to folks who are interested in knowing more about something that has changed my life.

Chapter 9

Power on Demand

As I said in the last chapter, two things happen when we pray in tongues: First, we are praying mysteries to our Father God, and second, we are edifying or building ourselves up.

We've talked about what it means to speak mysteries, now let's look at how the believer is edified by praying in other tongues. The apostle Paul said:

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

—1 Corinthians 14:4

There's an edification that happens in our spirits when we pray in other tongues. This should not be just a one-time event. It should be an ongoing experience we practice beyond the initial infilling of the Spirit. It's a gift that continues to impact our lives and change us from glory to glory. It makes God's power available on demand.

When you hook up a battery charger, it is designed to charge the battery

over time. It doesn't charge the battery instantly. It may take several hours to fully charge, depending on how low the battery is and how many amps are flowing into it. It's a process.

The same is true with speaking in tongues. You won't be completely recharged or built up instantly, but if you pray in tongues, over time, it will build you up. It increases the power working in your life by working more like a trickle charger than a sudden jolt of energy.

We are meant to spend time in God's Word, in fellowship with Him and in prayer, and this includes praying in the Spirit. God doesn't give us one big dose of His Word and one big infilling of His power that lasts the rest of our lives. The same is true with physical food; we don't eat one big meal the day we are born and then never have the need to eat again. To be strong and healthy physically, we must eat regularly for the rest of our lives.

When it comes to the spiritual things, the Bible tells us to pray without ceasing, and praying in tongues helps us do that. We aren't meant to pray once and move on, but to pray regularly and consistently, and in the process, we are building ourselves up. As you make a habit of praying in tongues, you will begin to realize that you don't want to live without it.

We shouldn't pray in tongues out of religious duty, but we should want to pray in the Spirit because it builds us up and impacts the way we live our lives. We see the same principle in the book of Jude:

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

—Jude 1:20

The Bible also tells us that praying in tongues is refreshing:

For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," and, "This is the refreshing;"

—Isaiah 28:11-12

Isaiah gave us this prophecy hundreds of years before the Holy Spirit was poured out. He described the effects of speaking in other tongues as *a refreshing*. This was just another way of saying that praying in tongues builds us up by refreshing the soul and calming the mind.

Again, it is power on demand, but it is not something that someone else can do for you. You have to do the praying yourself to benefit from it.

I was teaching on this subject in a church many years ago, and I took extra time discussing the benefits of praying in tongues and how it would help people if they would do it on a regular basis. A woman came up to me after the teaching and said, "I have a question for you. If I record myself praying in other tongues for 30 to 45 minutes, and I just play that recording in my house every day, will I get the same benefits I

get if I pray in tongues myself every day?”

Obviously, the answer is “no.” That would be like filming yourself working out at the gym, and instead of working out the rest of the week, you just play the video each day. It’s not going to do your body a bit of good! *You* have to pray in tongues to reap the benefits. “*He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself,*” (1 Cor. 14:4). When you speak in tongues, it is not going to edify your neighbor, and when your neighbor speaks in tongues, it’s not going to edify you; and playing a recording of prayer will certainly not take the place of personal prayer.

I’ve spent hours at a time waiting on God, praying and seeking His direction by praying in the Spirit. I’ve found praying in tongues incredibly helpful when seeking God’s guidance. The next time you need to make a decision or you have a need or you’re becoming anxious to know what to do about a certain situation, try praying in tongues for a couple of hours. By the time you finish, you’ll either know by revelation what you’re supposed to do or you’ll be so built up and full of God you won’t care that you don’t know! Either way, you benefit.

Praying in tongues, along with fasting and feeding on God’s Word, accelerates spiritual growth exponentially. Notice what Paul said:

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

—1 Corinthians 14:14

When we pray in tongues, our spirits are praying in a way that is uninhibited by the intellect. This allows the spirit to begin to dominate the mind. If you pray long enough, your mind begins to realize it's not in control anymore. Your spirit is communing with God, receiving revelation from Him and making decisions based on divine direction, not just logic. This is a great way to override the mind and allow the spirit to dominate.

Many people spend their entire Christian lives being dominated by their own intellect. They won't do anything they can't understand or explain or see. It's impossible to know and do all the will of God in your life until the heart begins to override the head.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

Leaning to the understanding or intellect alone severely limits the Christian life. However, it's tremendously liberating to live out of your spirit, and one of the greatest ways to get your spirit active and your mind quiet is to pray in tongues.

In many cases, we can't hear what God is saying to us because our minds are so active. Praying in other tongues helps quiet the mind and allows

you to focus on the inward witness, which is God's voice on the inside of you, so you can hear what He is saying.

I have a lot more teaching on this subject in my audio series *Hearing God's Voice*.

Many times, revelation comes while praying in tongues. Much of my teaching and most of the illustrations I use have come while praying in tongues and waiting on God. I love to spend time this way. All of us get busy and distracted with the things of this world from time to time. Praying in the Spirit helps put things back into proper perspective.

Let me encourage you to use this supernatural weapon. The Bible doesn't tell us how much time we must spend in prayer; neither does it tell us how many times a month to go to church or how much time per week we are required to read the Bible. We're under the new covenant, which is a covenant of grace. God believes in us and the new nature He put inside us. We should pray more under this new covenant because we want to than we ever would because we had to. Prayer time is never wasted time.

Once you've received the gift of the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues, don't wait 20 or 30 years before praying in tongues again. It's a remarkable gift, but it won't benefit you if you don't use it. Get this gift working in your life, and experience the ongoing blessing it provides!

Chapter 10

Answers to Common Questions

I want to address some of the most common questions asked concerning speaking in other tongues. People don't seem to have as much of a problem with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit or the gift of the Holy Spirit. In most cases, the misunderstandings and disagreements occur over speaking in tongues.

If you've never prayed in tongues and you are truly interested in knowing the truth about the subject, let me encourage you not to take advice from people who've never done it. It seems like these "experts" who are speaking out against it have never tried it. So, how can they really know what they're talking about?

One reason there are so many questions about speaking in tongues is because it's hard to explain to people who haven't experienced it. It's difficult to describe to someone how to begin to speak out sounds and syllables they've never heard or spoken before that originate in their spirits. By the time you finish trying to explain it, you're not sure if you made it more complicated than before! Speaking in tongues is easy to do, but it's hard to explain. It's almost like trying to describe to someone

how to swallow a drink of water. We do it all the time, but trying to explain it could get confusing.

Let's look at a few common questions people have concerning speaking in tongues.

Didn't Paul tell us not to speak in tongues?

The simple answer is "no." Paul did not say, "Don't speak in tongues." What he did say was, "yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19). But He was giving correction and instruction about the use of tongues *in church* in 1 Corinthians 14. However, in verse 5, he said, "*I wish you all spoke with tongues....*" So, he is not against it.

As we previously discussed, Paul said he spoke in tongues more than all of them, but the context of his teaching in this chapter is the proper use of tongues *in the church* or *in a public setting*. So, the key to understanding 1 Corinthians 14 is the word *church*. He uses *church* or *in church* seven times in this chapter because the Corinthians were misusing the gift of tongues during public worship services. They were speaking in tongues to each other without any interpretation. Speakers were addressing the congregation in tongues, and no one understood what they were saying. It was an abuse of *the gift of tongues*.

To understand Paul's correction, it's important to know that there's a

difference between the public use of tongues in a church service and the private use of tongues in your own prayer life.

Paul was focusing exclusively on the use of tongues in church throughout this chapter:

I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

—1 Corinthians 14:5

Here, he is addressing people who were speaking in tongues when they shouldn't have been, and it was causing confusion. In verse 4, he said *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself....”* Then he says, *“but he who prophesies edifies the church.”*

If someone is going to lead a church service and edify the church, they must speak in a language everyone understands. Praying in tongues edifies the person who is praying, but it does nothing for those who are listening unless it is accompanied by the gift of interpretation

Prophecy, on the other hand, is an inspired utterance in a known language for the benefit of the church. If English is your native language, your prophecies would be in English and be understood by the audience—provided they speak English.

He explains it further in verse six:

*But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues,
what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by
revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?*

—1 Corinthians 14:6

This was clearly directed toward the public use of tongues as he said, “*if I come to you.*” They must have been speaking in tongues to one another when they came together. In private, you can speak in tongues all you want and it isn’t necessary to have an interpretation. You’re speaking to yourself and to God. You’re praying perfect prayers and edifying yourself.

Two of the nine *gifts of the Spirit* are unique to this dispensation—tongues and the interpretation of tongues—and should always be used together in public. The other seven of the nine gifts of the Spirit were seen in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Tongues and the interpretation of tongues became operative on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church and the dispensation of the Spirit began. That’s the day we’re living in now. The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues were given by the Holy Spirit to edify the church and will be in operation primarily in a church setting.

In verse 12, Paul said:

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

—1 Corinthians 14:12

We shouldn't go to church to show off or to show people how well we can speak in tongues. He's saying, "Look, it's good to be hungry for spiritual gifts, but use them to bless and edify the church." That's sound advice for all of us.

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

—1 Corinthians 14:13-16

If you're going to speak to someone or pray in a group setting, how will it help them if you speak to them in tongues? And how are they going to say "amen" if they don't know what you're saying?

For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I

thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

—1 Corinthians 14:17-19 (emphasis mine)

Paul wasn't telling them not to speak in tongues. He was saying, if you're going to do it in a church setting, there needs to be an interpreter. The gift of tongues should be followed by the gift of interpretation of tongues. It should be obvious to most people that if a preacher stood behind the pulpit and spoke to the congregation in a language they didn't understand for an hour, it wouldn't be helpful.

I'm not going to teach on the nine gifts of the Spirit in this book, but you can see them in first Corinthians 12. There are three revelation gifts: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits. There are three power gifts: the gift of faith, the working of miracles and gifts of healings. And there are three utterance gifts: prophecy, tongues and the interpretation of tongues. These nine gifts make up the gifts of the Spirit, and they're used in public for blessing and edifying people.

But all those gifts are in addition to, and separate from, the private use of tongues—where you have your own personal prayer language and can pray to God in tongues as much as you want for as long as you want. You're praying perfect prayers and giving thanks well, as Paul said, so it

doesn't need to be interpreted.

You may ask, "Well, why don't I need to have an interpretation when I'm speaking in tongues in private?" Because you are praying to God and He understands what you're saying. Your spirit is able to fully express itself with the help of the Holy Spirit, so there's no interpretation necessary. Although at times, you may have the interpretation in private, it's not always necessary. The majority of the time when I pray in tongues, I don't know what I'm saying, and unless God reveals it to me, I may never know. And that's okay. I still get all the benefits of praying in other tongues in private even when I don't know what I'm saying.

However, if you're in church, at some point in the service, someone might have a message in tongues, stand and address the congregation in an unknown tongue. That means, in most cases, no one knows what was said. If done scripturally, this will be followed by an interpretation. The Holy Spirit will give someone, either the person who gave the message in tongues or someone else, the interpretation. Whoever receives the interpretation will stand up and give it to the congregation in a language they understand. So, you have a message in tongues, and then you have an interpretation.

Paul is far from telling us not to speak in tongues. He's just saying, if you're going to address a congregation in other tongues, you always need to have it interpreted. If you don't have an interpreter, then you should keep quiet and just speak to yourself and to God. You can speak to yourself and God in tongues all day long.

The Corinthians were very zealous for spiritual things, but they were in need of some guidelines. Paul sums up his teaching on this subject in verse 40 by saying, *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”*

How does speaking in tongues help if you don't know what you're saying?

We covered the answer to this question more thoroughly in earlier chapters, but I want to include a brief answer in this section as well so the answers to the most asked questions can all be found in one place. I have spent thousands of hours praying in tongues, and I can say without a doubt that speaking in tongues helps even when we don't know what we're saying.

First of all, we're praying prayers to God. These prayers are not limited by our finite knowledge. There are enemies and situations we will encounter that we may not be prepared for because we aren't aware of them ahead of time. By praying in the Spirit, we are able to pray about things before they happen.

There may be times when you sense a “burden” to pray, and you're not aware of what it is, but as you continue to follow the Holy Spirit in prayer, you reach a place of victory or release. You may not know what it was, but you know you've gotten your answer and that the situation is resolved.

When you pray in tongues actively and continually, day in and day out, you can sense that your steps are more ordered and that your life is lived more purposefully, productively and accurately.

There are times when I'm praying in the Spirit, and although I don't know exactly what I'm praying about, I sense that God is setting things in order. Things are being put in place in my future, concerning provision or protection or in my ministry. Direction comes and decisions are made; wisdom comes and things that need to be changed are being changed. It's just amazing! It's a tremendous tool and not even the enemy knows what's being said. It's prayer in secret code, and they may be listening, but not even Alexa or Siri know what we are saying!

No wonder the accuser of the brethren is spreading lies about speaking in tongues: "Speaking in tongues is of the devil. It's not going to do you any good. Those people who do that are crazy. They're fanatics!" The enemy is doing everything he can to keep Christians from praying in other tongues because of the power it unleashes.

Try spending 30 minutes or an hour praying in other tongues in your own place of prayer. Turn on some good worship music and begin to pray quietly in other tongues. Focus on your spirit. Don't let your mind wander. Look down on the inside and become sensitive to that inward witness in your spirit. After 30 minutes or so, ask yourself if that did any good. Did that help? God's Word says, "*He who speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself.*" And God's Word is true!

Pastor John Osteen was a leading figure in the Charismatic movement, and I heard him tell a story about this very subject. He said that in the early days of his ministry, he was asked to go on live TV and talk about the gift of the Holy Spirit. He was on a panel with other people who didn't believe in it, and they were there to have a debate with him. They went back and forth, over and over. He wasn't convincing them, and they weren't convincing him. Finally, one of them said, "Well, can you pray in tongues anytime you want?"

And John Osteen said, "Well, yeah. Sure, I can."

The panel member said, "Well, just do it right now."

Brother Osteen said, "Alright, let's just do it."

On live television, he had them all get up, stand in a circle, hold hands and close their eyes. John Osteen began to pray in other tongues. He said, "I prayed in tongues and prayed in tongues and prayed in tongues! I prayed until I was just about to float off on a cloud!"

He got so edified and blessed! Finally, he stopped praying and looked around, and one of the opposers said, "Well, see there. I didn't understand anything, not a word of what you said, and it didn't do me any good at all."

And brother Osteen said, "Well, it isn't supposed to help you. It's supposed to edify me, and I feel wonderful!"

He was so full after a session of praying in other tongues that it didn't matter what anyone else said or thought about it. It wasn't for anyone else. He had the experience and the benefits that go with it! For anyone who has had this experience, it doesn't take long to realize that, even though you don't know what you're saying, you're getting tremendous benefits every time you pray to God in other tongues.

Is speaking in tongues for today or did it pass away with the last apostle?

We have addressed this question earlier also, but again, I want to include a brief answer in this chapter as well. I don't know where that notion came from, and maybe it's not as prevalent now as it was when I was filled with the Holy Spirit in the '70s. But this is what the church I grew up in said when my family and I were Spirit-filled. They believed that those gifts passed away with the apostles. I always wondered how it could be that when the last apostle died, the Holy Spirit just withdrew from the Earth.

You don't see that in the Bible. In fact, I'll give you a couple of scriptures that prove just the opposite:

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

—Mark 16:17

This was Jesus speaking, and He said that believers, not just apostles, will cast out devils and speak with new tongues. Two verses earlier, He gave what we call the Great Commission. He said, “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*” Has that been done away with? Did that commission die with the last apostle? Certainly not! He said believers should preach the gospel, lay hands on the sick, cast out devils and speak with other tongues. None of those things has passed away. If it’s still scriptural to preach the gospel, then it’s still scriptural to speak in tongues.

We were also taken to the following scriptures by some of our Christian friends who wanted to prove that tongues had been done away with:

...But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

—1 Corinthians 13:8b-10

Their position stated that Jesus and the Bible are perfect and they have come. So, all these things have passed away and tongues have ceased. But according to this passage, as long as we still know in part then that which is perfect has not yet come. Paul is saying the gifts of the Spirit will be done away with *when that which is perfect has come*. He’s not talking about the Bible or even Jesus. *That which is perfect* is referring to

the day when heaven comes down to Earth (Rev. 21), and we know even as we are known (1 Cor. 13:12) and everything is the way it's supposed to be; then all these will pass away. That which is perfect—the full manifestation of our redemption—has not been seen or experienced yet. Therefore, these gifts have not yet passed away. They are active on the Earth today.

Is speaking in tongues of the devil and will I get a devil or an evil spirit?

There are some who are reluctant to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit because they're afraid they will get a devil or an evil spirit instead of the Holy Spirit. That's not scriptural. We've quoted this scripture many times, but it's relevant here. Luke 11:13 says, *"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!"*

When you ask God for the Holy Spirit, you're not going get a devil. God will give you what you ask for. When you asked God for salvation, you didn't become a member of some demonic cult. It's wrong to think God would fail to deliver on His own promises.

You're not opening yourself up to the devil or to evil when you ask God for something He promised in His Word. Speaking in tongues after being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not of the devil. I'm not saying there aren't demonic counterfeits that exist because for every good thing God has done, there's usually a counterfeit. But if in fact there are people who

are speaking in tongues as the result of demonic influence, this does not change the fact that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is from God and it's for us today. And it includes the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues. It's not of the devil!

If speaking in tongues is so important, why didn't Jesus do it?

First, even though there is no record that Jesus spoke in tongues, He did say that we would. This ought to make the question moot.

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

—Mark 16:17 (emphasis mine)

If we are going to take Jesus at His Word, then believers should speak with new tongues.

Second, Jesus' life and ministry took place before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church. It wasn't until after Jesus ascended to heaven that the dispensation of the Spirit began. This includes speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues. In fact, there is no record that anyone spoke in tongues before the day of Pentecost. The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues are unique to this dispensation.

Jesus said:

... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the

Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

—John 7:37-39 (emphasis mine)

The ministry of the Holy Spirit on the Earth became what it is today after Jesus was glorified.

Third, Jesus was sinless and didn't have the same limitations we have. He could pray to God with perfect expression without the need to speak in tongues. It is interesting to note that even though we have no evidence He spoke in tongues, Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit. After being water baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove.

The scripture says:

... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

—Acts 10:38

Jesus did not have a miracle ministry until He was filled with the Holy Spirit at 30 years of age. If He needed the gift of the Holy Spirit, then we certainly do! This is why He was emphatic that His disciples tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they too were endued with power from on

high. He insisted they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit before they began the work of the ministry. So, even though it is unlikely Jesus spoke in tongues, He certainly was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and He instructs all of us to be as well.

It is impossible for me to cover every question or concern that people may have about the gift of the Holy Spirit in this book. But I have tried to include the most common concerns of the people I have encountered over the years. If you have more questions about this vital subject or need personal prayer, I encourage you to call our Helpline or go to a Spirit-filled church, tell them what you've learned and request further counsel.

I hope this book has given you food for thought, truths to stand on and faith to receive this wonderful gift. Being filled with the Holy Ghost and power is the beginning of a new life with God like no other!

About the Author

Greg Fritz has been spreading the Good News of the gospel for over 40 years, traveling literally millions of miles in the United States and abroad.

His travels include life-changing ministry in over 25 nations of the world, emphasizing grace, faith and revival! Greg Fritz Ministries has shared the message of Jesus to thousands through his teaching materials.

In 2018, Greg began producing the *Good News Show*, which airs Monday through Friday at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (CT) on Andrew Wommack's GTTV (GospelTruth.TV). Through this program, his website, a large social media presence and speaking at churches, Bible schools and conferences around the world, Greg is transforming lives with the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Greg is a graduate of Rhema Bible Training Center and lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with his wife Carol.

Other Works by Greg Fritz

Good News: It's So Good the Bad News Doesn't Matter

Living with No Regrets

Living in Stressful Times without Losing Your Mind

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All these books, as well as a wealth of teaching resources, are available at GregFritz.org. Many of the teaching series are available free of charge in the Free Downloads - Audio/Video section at GregFritz.org/Products/. Just use code FREE at checkout!

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