

# UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL GIFTS *Part 3*

## **1 Corinthians 14:31**

***31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.***

Notice how Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to “prophesy” or operate in spiritual gifts that they might be comforted *and* that they might LEARN. We might ask, “Learn what?” —Learn how to *cooperate* with the Spirit of God!

We must understand that the Spirit of God is not a *force* that we master. Instead, the Spirit of God is a *person* that we cooperate with. In other words, operating in spiritual gifts is not ***technical*** or about having the right technique. Operating in spiritual gifts is ***relational*** or about learning to yield to the Spirit. Moreover, this kind of learning takes time and PRACTICE (involvement)!

Now, one of the simplest ways to learn how to cooperate with the Spirit is to practice speaking in tongues.

## **Acts 2:4**

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

Notice, the disciples didn’t simply “speak with tongues”. They spoke AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE! Therefore, speaking in tongues is something we do in conjunction (or in cooperation) with the Spirit.

Now, someone might ask, “Doesn’t the Bible teach that not everyone is given to speak with tongues?” Yes, it does.

## **1 Corinthians 12:30**

***30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?***

Although the Bible teaches that not all will speak with tongues, it’s speaking about the *gift of tongues* given for the benefit of others. However, NOT ALL TONGUES is given for the benefit of others. Sometimes speaking in tongues is given for the benefit of the speaker!

## **1 Corinthians 14:4**

***4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.***

How do tongues benefit the speaker? Speaking in tongues benefits the speaker...

## **BY INCREASING YOUR FAITH**

**Jude 20**

***20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,***

The phrase ‘building up’ literally means **to build upon** or **carry further**. Therefore, praying in the Spirit (speaking in tongues) has the potential to cause a person to increase in their faith.

We should point out that the word ‘faith’ in this verse is a reference to TRUTH! Moreover, we grow “in the faith” through spiritual activity (i.e. praying in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, etc).

Speaking in tongues benefits the speaker in other ways, like...

## **BY ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION**

**1 Corinthians 14:14, 15**

***14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.***

Notice Paul didn’t ‘pray in tongues’ because he was swept up by the Spirit. Paul ‘prayed in tongues’ because he CHOSE to pray in tongues!

Operating the gifts of the Spirit is something we do voluntarily. In other words, operating the gifts of the Spirit ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION on our part.

**1 Corinthians 12:1, 2**

***1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.***

Prior to becoming Christians, the Corinthians were accustomed to being “carried away” or in altered states of consciousness whenever they practiced their pagan worship. Paul wanted them to know that operating in spiritual gifts was nothing like this. Instead, operating in spiritual gifts was about remaining under control!

### **1 Corinthians 14:32**

***32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.***

When a person operates in a spiritual gift (like prophecy) the Spirit is subject to THEIR will. In other words, a person remains in control the entire time they are prophesying!

### **Acts 2:4, 12–15**

***4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.***

Although the disciples APPEARED like they were drunk, they were not. They were sober and in control of their actions.

*While SOME encounters with God can temporarily cause a person to lose control, GENERALLY God wants us to remain in control when operating in or under the influence of the Spirit!*

Lastly, speaking in tongues benefits the speaker...

## **BY PRODUCING DISCERNMENT**

### **1 John 2:20**

***20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.***

Everyone who has the Spirit has what the Bible calls an “unction.” The word unction represents the *anointing* OR what is produced by the anointing! According to this verse, one of the things that is produced by the anointing is *discernment*. Those who have (or operate in) the Spirit will have an increase in discernment. Meaning, they will “know” things they otherwise would not.

### **1 Corinthians 2:11, 12**

***11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.***

Notice, the Spirit is given to us that we might “know” things that are given to us by God.

However, it’s important to understand that this kind of knowledge (discernment) is not automatic. Meaning, you don’t receive the discernment just because you *have* the Spirit. This kind of discernment is developed through USE!

***Hebrews 5:14***

***14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***