



the spiritual gifts

Small Group Guide: The Spiritual Gifts, Week 14

Key Takeaways:

1. **Definition of Tongues** - The gift of tongues is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit in which a person speaks in a language they've never learned and don't understand.
2. **Two Categories of Tongues**
 - a. Human dialects (languages of people)
 - b. Angelic dialects (languages of heaven)
3. **Primary Purpose** - The primary purpose of speaking in tongues is to enhance your prayer life, not to preach the gospel to other nations.
4. **Our Common Infirmary** - We all share one weakness: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Romans 8:26).
5. **Two Criteria for Answered Prayer**
 - a. You must **ask**
 - b. You must ask **according to God's will**

Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you most about the biblical definition of tongues? How does this differ from what you may have heard or believed before?
2. Who is the audience when someone speaks in tongues? Why is this significant?
3. Why do you think tongues is the most controversial of all the spiritual gifts? What misconceptions have you encountered?
4. What does it mean that we have an "infirmity" when it comes to prayer? Can you share a time when you didn't know what to pray for in a difficult situation?
5. The word "intercession" (hyperintuxeno) literally means "to hit the mark in behalf of another." How does this change your understanding of what the Holy Spirit does when we pray in tongues?
6. Who is doing the "groaning" in Romans 8:26—us or the Holy Spirit? Why does this distinction matter?
7. What are the two requirements for answered prayer? How does speaking in tongues help us meet both requirements?
8. How should tongues operate in a church service versus in private prayer? Why did Paul give different instructions for public and private use? (Reference 1 Corinthians 14:4-6)
9. Pastor Allen emphasized that tongues is for personal edification in your prayer closet. How might this understanding prevent some of the abuses or confusion surrounding this gift?

Practical Application:

1. Evaluate your prayer life. Identify specific situations where you don't know what to pray for or what God's will might be.
2. Practice asking according to God's will. Before making requests, ask God to reveal His will in the situation.
3. For Those Who Don't Speak in Tongues: If you desire this gift, simply tell God: "If You want me to have it, I want to have it. I'm not going to work it up, but I'm open to Your Holy Spirit interceding through me."
4. Don't seek the gift in public or chaotic settings. Seek it in your private prayer time.
5. For Those Who Speak in Tongues: Incorporate praying in the Spirit into your daily prayer routine, especially when you reach the limits of what you know to pray.
6. Be sensitive to proper use in public settings. Remember Paul's instruction that in church, prophecy edifies everyone, but tongues only edifies the speaker (unless interpreted).

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for not leaving us alone in our weakness. Thank You that when we don't know what to pray for, Your Holy Spirit intercedes for us according to Your perfect will. Help us to be open to all the gifts You want to give us, not to show off, but to enhance our relationship with You and to pray effectively. Remove any fear, confusion, or misconceptions about Your gifts. We want to operate in Your perfect will. In Jesus' name, Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: Understanding Our Weakness

Reading: Romans 8:26-27

Devotional: Every believer faces a common struggle: we don't always know what to pray for according to God's perfect will. This isn't a failure; it's a recognized weakness that God has already addressed. The Holy Spirit steps into our uncertainty and intercedes on our behalf, translating our groanings into prayers that hit the bullseye of God's will. Today, acknowledge areas where you feel uncertain in prayer. Rather than being frustrated by your limitations, see them as opportunities for the Holy Spirit to work powerfully through you. Your weakness becomes the platform for His strength.

Day 2: The Gift of Tongues Defined

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:2-4, 14-15

Devotional: Speaking in tongues is not about impressing others or proving spirituality. It's a supernatural gift where the Holy Spirit enables you to speak languages you've never learned either human dialects or angelic languages directly to God. When you pray in tongues, your spirit prays even when your mind doesn't understand. This gift exists primarily to enhance your personal prayer life, allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through you according to God's perfect will. It edifies you spiritually, building you up in faith. Consider asking God to open this gift in your life, not for display, but for deeper communion with Him.

Day 3: Asking According to God's Will

Reading: James 4:2-3; 1 John 5:14-15

Devotional: Two criteria must be met for effective prayer: you must ask, and you must ask according to God's will. Many prayers go unanswered not because God is distant, but because we either don't ask or we ask selfishly. The beauty of praying in the Spirit is that the Holy Spirit ensures your prayers align perfectly with God's will. You don't have to guess or worry whether you're praying correctly. When you reach the limits of your understanding, the Spirit takes over and intercedes with precision. Today, bring your concerns to God honestly, then invite the Holy Spirit to pray through you what you cannot express.

Day 4: Speaking to God, Not Man

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:1-6

Devotional: Tongues is fundamentally about your relationship with God, not about ministry to others. When you speak in tongues, you're speaking mysteries to God in your private prayer time. In corporate worship, prophecy edifies the church because everyone understands, but tongues edifies the individual believer. Paul wished everyone spoke in tongues because everyone shares the same weakness, not knowing what to pray. Don't let misunderstanding or misuse of this gift keep you from receiving what God offers. Use

tongues in your prayer closet to deepen your intimacy with God. Save prophecy and understandable speech for building up the body of Christ.

Day 5: Hitting the Mark Through the Spirit

Reading: Romans 8:27; Ephesians 6:18

Devotional: The Greek word for intercession in Romans 8:26 literally means "to hit the mark in the bullseye on behalf of another." While sin causes us to miss the mark, the Holy Spirit ensures our prayers hit the target of God's perfect will. This is the ultimate purpose of praying in the Spirit: guaranteed accuracy in prayer. When you feel overwhelmed, confused, or inadequate in prayer, remember that the Spirit knows the Father's heart completely. He searches your heart, understands your needs better than you do, and presents your case flawlessly before the throne. Trust Him today to intercede for you with perfect precision.