



the spiritual gifts

Small Group Guide: The Spiritual Gifts, Week 15

Key Takeaways:

1. **Interpretation vs. Translation** - The gift of interpretation of tongues is NOT the same as translation. Translation is word-for-word rendering from one language to another, while interpretation gives the general gist or essence of what is being spoken.
2. **The Purpose of Interpretation** - When someone speaks in an unknown tongue (angelic dialect), God reveals the main point or essence of the message to the interpreter, even though they don't understand the actual language being spoken.
3. **How It Works** - The gift of interpretation works similarly to the word of knowledge, God supernaturally imparts understanding of the message's meaning to the interpreter.
4. **Direction of the Message** - Although tongues is prayer directed TO God, the interpretation is often addressed to

people because the subject matter concerns us and our situations.

Discussion Questions:

Understanding the Gift

1. Before this sermon, what was your understanding of the interpretation of tongues? How has this teaching clarified or changed your perspective?
2. Why do you think it's important to distinguish between "interpretation" and "translation" when it comes to spiritual gifts?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 14:13-14. Why does Paul instruct those who speak in tongues to pray for the ability to interpret? What does this reveal about God's desire for us?

Biblical Examples

1. Discuss the difference between what happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the operation of unknown tongues in the church today. Why didn't the Day of Pentecost require interpretation?
2. Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 12:4 that he heard things "so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words." How does this help us understand why we need interpretation rather than translation of heavenly languages?

Deeper Reflection

1. Pastor Allen explained that the interpretation is often addressed to people even though tongues is prayer to God. How does this help you understand the practical nature of this gift in corporate worship?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 14:2 - "For he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men but unto God; for no man understands him." What comfort or challenge does this verse bring to you personally?

Practical Application:

1. Have you ever been in a church service where tongues and interpretation were operating? What was your experience? If not, how do you feel about the possibility?
2. Pastor Allen's sermon mentioned that knowing about spiritual gifts helps us discern when they're being used correctly or incorrectly. Why is this important for the body of Christ?
3. If you speak in tongues privately, have you ever prayed for interpretation? What happened? If not, would you be willing to try?
4. **Study Time:** Read 1 Corinthians 14 in its entirety. Make notes about what Paul says regarding the proper use of tongues and interpretation in corporate worship.
5. **Prayer Practice:** If you speak in tongues, dedicate time this week to pray in tongues and then pause to ask God for interpretation. Journal what you sense God revealing.
6. **Research Project:** Look up the word "hermeneutics" and learn more about biblical interpretation principles. How might understanding interpretation in Scripture help you understand the gift of interpretation of tongues?
7. **Honest Conversation:** If you're uncomfortable with or confused about spiritual gifts, talk to your group leader or pastor about your questions. Seek understanding rather than avoiding the topic.

8. Discernment Development: If your church operates in spiritual gifts, pay attention this week to how they're being used. Are they following biblical guidelines? Pray for wisdom and discernment.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the rich diversity of spiritual gifts within the body of Christ. We ask for wisdom and discernment to understand and appreciate these gifts fully. We lift up those who operate in tongues and interpretation, praying for clarity and strength in their ministry. Where there is confusion, Lord, bring understanding and peace. Guide us through Your Holy Spirit to recognize how we can each serve the body effectively with our unique gifts, promoting unity and growth within the church. May we always glorify You with the gifts You have entrusted to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: The Language of Heaven

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 14:2

Devotional: When we speak in tongues, we speak mysteries to God in a language our minds cannot comprehend. This gift reminds us that our relationship with God transcends human understanding. The Holy Spirit prays through us when we lack words, interceding with perfect knowledge of God's will. Today, reflect on the areas of your life where you feel inadequate in prayer. Consider that God has provided a way for you to pray beyond your limitations. Whether you speak in tongues or not, trust that the Holy Spirit intercedes for you according to God's perfect will. Surrender your need to understand everything, and rest in the knowledge that God hears the prayers your heart cannot articulate.

Day 2: The Gift of Interpretation

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:13-14; 2 Corinthians 12:2-4

Devotional: God desires that we understand the essence of what He is saying, even when the language is heavenly. The gift of interpretation reveals not a word-for-word translation, but the heart and gist of God's message. Paul himself experienced things so astounding they could not be expressed in human words. This teaches us humility we cannot contain all of God's mysteries in our finite understanding. Yet God graciously gives us glimpses of His heart and purposes. Today, ask God to help you discern His voice in whatever form it comes. Pray for spiritual sensitivity to recognize when He is speaking, and for wisdom to understand the essence of His message to you and through you to others.

Day 3: Speaking to God, Not Man

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:2-4; Romans 8:26-27

Devotional: When we pray in tongues, we speak directly to God, not to people. No human understands, but God hears perfectly. This intimate form of prayer bypasses our intellectual limitations and connects spirit to Spirit. Romans tells us the Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words when we do not know how to pray. What freedom this brings! You need not have perfect theology or eloquent words. The Spirit within you knows exactly what to pray. Today, identify situations where you feel helpless or uncertain on how to pray. In those moments, remember that the Holy Spirit is your helper, praying through you with a perfect understanding of both your needs and God's will.

Day 4: Supernatural Knowledge and Revelation

Reading: John 4:16-19; 1 Corinthians 12:8

Devotional: Jesus demonstrated the word of knowledge when He revealed the Samaritan woman's past. He knew facts that He had no natural way of knowing. Similarly, God may reveal knowledge to us not to show off spiritual prowess, but to minister effectively to others. The gifts of the Spirit are always for edification, never for personal glory. When God gives you insight about someone's situation, He is inviting you to participate in His compassionate work. Today, ask God for sensitivity to His supernatural leadership. Be willing to step out in faith when He reveals something to you, using that knowledge to bring healing, hope, and help to those around you.

Day 5: The Art and Science of Interpretation

Reading: 1 Corinthians 14:26-33; 2 Timothy 2:15

Devotional: Understanding God's Word and His voice requires both systematic study and spiritual sensitivity in science and the art. Hermeneutics teaches us proper interpretation principles, but the Holy Spirit teaches us when and how to apply them. This balance is crucial in all spiritual gifts. We need biblical knowledge and Spirit-led discernment working together. Without Scripture, we can be led astray by subjective feelings. Without the Spirit, Scripture becomes lifeless rules. Today, commit to growing in both areas. Study God's Word diligently, but also cultivate intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to teach you not just what the Bible says, but how to apply it with wisdom and grace in every situation you face.