**Understanding the Charismatic Gift of Tongues**

**Introduction:**

**What is the Gift of Tongues?**

* A quickening of the tongue by the Holy Spirit, enabling a person to pray in a language unknown to the person.“If I pray in a tongue, my spirit is at prayer but my mind is unproductive.” (1 Cor 14:14)
* It helps an individual to express his or her inexpressible love, thanks, and praise to God
* It can sound like babble, but it is actual prayer – prayer beyond words. “In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will.” (Rom 8:26-27)
* Tongues can be used at any time: during praise and worship, when you wake up or before going to sleep, in your personal prayer time, while you are walking, while you are traveling in the car, etc.
* Tongues is the most common Charismatic Gift.
* Tongues is a gateway to the other Charismatic Gifts:
  + It helps us to surrender to the Holy Spirit in a new way
  + It takes humility (i.e. embarrassing ourselves / faith as a child)
  + It affects other areas of our life (source of encouragement and joy)

**Nervousness:** is normal, remember the Holy Spirit is a “gentleman” and will not force you to speak in tongues

**Initial Experience of Tongues:**

* Sometimes when people are prayed over tongues wells up spontaneously
* Often you freely yield to this Gift by praying with sounds, words, and syllables
* As you speak these sounds (your part) to God the Spirit gives you the words (God’s part)
* In this process you remain freely in control and can start and stop praying in tongues at will. It is like water coming out of a faucet – you have the power to turn the spigot on or off
* Sometimes the Gift is released into your life, but it is not actively experienced until later (hours or even days)
* Rarely (at God’s initiative) people experience it without the help of another person

**What are the Benefits of receiving the Gift of Tongues?**

* It will enrich and deepen your prayer life
  + Helps us to quickly connect our hearts to God
  + Helps us to leave distractions behind and focus on the Lord
  + Leads us to an experience of contemplation and union with God
* It will build you up and be a source of spiritual strength for you (1 Cor 14:4)
* It helps you more easily and regularly be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life

**What are some Common fears that can hinder the release of the Gift of Tongues?**

* Fear that it is not orthodox (the Church is in full support of Catholics experiencing this Gift)
* Fear of looking stupid (see 1 Cor 1:25)
* Fear of humbling oneself as a little child (see Matt 18:4)
* Fear of relaxing one’s grip and giving up control (see Prov 3:5)
* Fear of stepping out in faith and taking a risk (see Mark 6:48)
* “Do not be afraid” (Matt 14:27) – one of Jesus’ most frequent commands in scripture

**4 Kinds of Tongues**

**1) Tongues as your own Prayer Language** (Acts 2:4, 10:46; 1 Cor 14:5, 14-15)

-Gift that allows you to praise God in a new language

* It is the most common charismatic Gift

**What do we mean by language?**

* Sometimes we run out of words to praise God with
* Can be a Heavenly language – same the angels use worshipping God (1 Cor 13:1) or a non-familiar human language (Hebrew, French, Mandarin, Latin or 10,000 other possibilities) (Acts 2:1-13) or a special Language given directly to you
* It is a pure and holy language that you haven’t sinned in
* It is a love language between only you and God

**2) Gift of Singing in Tongues as a Community**

- A unique experience that occurs when a community sings in tongues together

- Especially when you reach a harmony such as the group prays with one voice

- Sometimes this experience can only be described as Angelic (1 Cor 13:1)

**3) Tongues as a Public Ministry** (Act 19:6; 1 Cor 14:6-40)

- Gift that is used by an individual to give a prophecy to the community

- Spoken out loud for all to hear

**Requires:** **Interpretation of Tongues** – someone who interprets the message (1 Cor 12:10, 28-30; 14:13)

* Not a translation but an explanation
* Often the interpretation is given by someone else who knows you well
* Sometimes the person themselves is able to give the interpretation

**4) Tongues for use in Prayer and Healing Ministry**

**a. Intercession –** specific tongue given for intercessory prayer (Rom 8:26)

**b. Deliverance –** specific tongue given for deliverance or exorcism ministry

**c. Healing –** specific tongue given for healing ministry

* + **Physical Healing** **Tongue** – healing needed specifically in your body
  + **Healing of the Heart Tongue–** emotional / psychological healing

**5) Scriptural References:**

**Jesus’ description of believers -** “These signs will accompany those who believe: in My Name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages.” (Mark 16:17)

**St. Paul’s encouragement -** “I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophecy” (1 Cor 14:5)

“I give thanks to God that I speak in tongues more than any of you” (1Cor 14:18)

“Do not forbid speaking in tongues” (1 Cor 14:39)

**Mary and the Apostles prayed in tongues:** “They entered …the upper room where they were staying,

Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of

Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James … Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

“And they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues**.” (Acts 1:13-14; 2:4)

**Six Categories of Tongues:**

1. **Personal Prayer Language –** gift given for praising God and personal spiritual benefit
2. **Gift of Singing in Tongues –** either as an individual personor in harmony as a community
3. **Prophetic Gift of Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues**

* Gift that is used to give a prophetic word to the community
* Requires Gift of Interpretation of Tongues to interpret the message

1. **Intercessory Language –** gift given specifically to intercede for ourselves and others
2. **Healing Language –** gift given specifically for healing ministry (physical or emotional / spiritual)
3. **Deliverance Language –** gift given specifically for deliverance ministry

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