

The Body #4: Mature Thinking about Tongues

We have seen in Chapter 12 that:

- Paul begins with a warning to them about being led astray to false spiritual gifts. (vs. 1-2)
- God has given every Christian a special ability to minister to others for Him. (vs. 7a)
- Every gift is given for the common good, not for personal edification. (vs. 7b)
- There are a variety of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. (vs. 4-6, 8-10)

Speaking gifts

apostleship
prophecy
evangelism
pastor-teacher
teaching
wisdom
knowledge
discernment

Service gifts

administration
exhortation
faith
giving
helps
mercy

Sign gifts

miracles
healings
tongues
interpretation of tongues

- God distributes the gifts as He wills, not as we choose. (vs. 11, 18)
- Every Christian is baptized by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. (vs. 13)
- All of us are necessary. (vs. 15-19)
- We need one another. (vs. 20-27)
- No gift is for everyone. (Including tongues) (vs. 28-31)

We have seen in Chapter 13 that:

- Biblical love is more important than spiritual gifts. (vs. 1-13)

⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (ESV)

Katargeo – it means to pass away.

Passive voice – which means something will cause them (that being prophecy and knowledge here) to pass away.

Pauo – it means to cease.

Middle voice – which means they (that being tongues) will cease of themselves.

5 Keys to Mature Thinking About Tongues (Chapter 14):

- Prophecy builds up the church while misused tongues only builds up the speaker.

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³ On

the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 1 Corinthians 14:1-4 (ESV)

³⁶ Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones it has reached?
1 Corinthians 14:36 (ESV)

⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:5a (ESV)

- **Only that which is understood builds up.**

⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, ¹¹ but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹² So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. ¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.
1 Corinthians 14:6-13 (ESV)

- **Praying in tongues is unfruitful.**

¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 1 Corinthians 14:14-19 (ESV)

²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.
1 Corinthians 14:20 (ESV)

- **Your understanding of tongues needs to be based upon mature thinking, not personal experience.**
- **The purpose of the gift of tongues was a sign to unbelieving Jews, not for the church.**

²¹ In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” ²² Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 (ESV)

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.” ¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. Acts 2:5-14 (ESV)

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Acts 2:22-23 (ESV)