

# Helping People Receive their Prayer Language

## 1. What is Praying in Tongues?

Praying in tongues is when a person prays in a language that is unknown to the one praying, as they are prompted by the Holy Spirit. "Glossolalia" is the Greek word for "speaking in tongues". Speaking in tongues could be in a heavenly language (one spoken by angels) or in an earthly language (one spoken by people) (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Synonyms for Tongues: praying in tongues, praying in the Spirit, speaking in tongues, singing in the Spirit, worshipping in tongues; personal prayer language, heavenly language, spiritual language, etc.

## 2. Scriptures about praying or speaking in tongues:

### a. You are praying to God.

**1 Corinthians 14:2 NIV** – *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.*

### b. We can pray with understanding and in tongues; both are important.

**1 Corinthians 14:15 NIV** – *So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. (NIV)*

### c. When praying in tongues, my spirit prays even though my mind does not understand.

**1 Corinthians 14:14 NLT** – *For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.*

### d. God is well pleased when we pray in tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:17 NET** – *For you are certainly giving thanks well, but the other person is not strengthened.*

### e. We are all encouraged to pray in tongues.

**1 Corinthians 14:5 ESV** – *Now I want you all to speak in tongues...*

### f. Praying in tongues is a sign that we are believers.

**Mark 16:17 NIV** – *These signs will accompany those who believe . . . they will speak in new tongues.*

### g. Paul is not ashamed to speak in tongues; he is thankful he does.

**1 Corinthians 14:18 NIV** – *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.*

*It is good to allow the Holy Spirit to lead your prayers in your known language, but it is not the same as praying in tongues, which has additional benefits.*

### 3. Benefits of praying/speaking in tongues

#### a. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally.

**1 Corinthians 14:4 NLT** – A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally...

#### b. When we don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit will lead us in prayer.

**Romans 8:26–27 NIV** – *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

#### c. Praying in the Spirit builds up our faith -

**Jude 20 MSG** – *But you, dear friends, carefully build yourselves up in this most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit...*

#### d. Praying in the Spirit is part of our spiritual weapons

**Ephesians 6:18 NIV (in the context of verses 14-17)** – *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

*The pattern in the New Testament is that when Christians received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6.)*

God gives us various tools so that we can be strong in our relationship with Him. These include reading the Bible, prayer, fellowship with other believers, Holy Communion, large church gatherings, worship, hearing the preached word, etc. None of these make us Christians in themselves, but each helps us to be stronger Christians. In the same way God gives spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues, prophecy, words of wisdom, etc. which also strengthen us. In the pressures of life we need all the gifts and tools that God has for us to enable us to be stronger and more effective for Him. **Praying/speaking in tongues is one of these great gifts or tools which should be used regularly.**

*Spiritual maturity is seen by how well we exhibit the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:1.) Speaking in tongues does not make you better than other Christians who don't speak in tongues, but it should make you better than what you used to be.*

#### 4. Receiving our prayer language

We receive our prayer language as part of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is distinct from salvation and water baptism (Acts 1:5). It is a gift from God and it is a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit that gives us greater access to the power and leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

- a. If you have not already done so, **ask** for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, understanding that as we ask, God will give the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13) and we will also have the ability to receive our prayer language.
- b. Expect to receive the gift of tongues along with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you have already received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and do not yet speak in tongues, ask specifically for your personal prayer language.
- c. Step out in faith, speaking audibly in tongues without premeditating the words.
  - i. This may require breathing over your vocal chords, moving your tongue and opening your mouth and letting God prompt the utterance that comes out.
  - ii. It will require speaking out the language (unknown to you) which God prompts you to speak.
  - iii. You may receive only one or two words or you may receive the whole language; start using what you've been given.
  - iv. The faith element requires that you speak what you do not understand and what may seem strange or silly to you, trusting that the source of your words is the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:26-27)
  - v. The Holy Spirit does not have to move in some dramatic way in order to speak in tongues. However, for some, God may deem it best that they experience Him in a more demonstrative way.
  - vi. Having received our personal prayer language, an individual should be able to speak in tongues whenever they personally desire or when prompted by the Holy Spirit. They do not need to ask again for the Holy Spirit to enable them to speak in tongues or wait for another occurrence of the Holy Spirit coming upon them before speaking in tongues again.

*Speaking in tongues does not originate from the human mind but uses the human organs of speech. As such, the human mind is not participating in the event but is aware of what is happening. It neither frames the utterance nor does it premeditate or pre-arrange the utterance.*

*Though the mind is not framing exact words and sounds, the mind may be involved in the focus or purpose of the prayers: i.e. "I am thinking of an individual or situation and don't know how to pray about that, so I pray in tongues as I think of that situation." My thoughts are on the situation but my words are not formed in my mind.*

## ACTIVATION:

### 1. Go through steps a, b and c of point 4.

*(If individuals already pray in tongues, encourage them to pray out loud as others are going through the steps.)*

### 2. Get feedback from the group. What did they experience, what did they sense?

### 3. Talk about the challenges:

#### a. I didn't seem to get anything. Why didn't I receive a prayer language?

If you asked sincerely, you can be confident that you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and you have the ability to speak in tongues. Do not be frustrated. You should anticipate in the coming days, to start speaking in your prayer language. This may happen in a time of worship and praise, in a time of prayer or meditation, when you're driving, or even when you're sleeping. One merely needs to step out in faith and start speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit prompts them.

#### b. How do I know that I am not making this up?

The enemy will want you to think that you are making it up, to cause you to stop functioning in this powerful prayer language, but God is faithful to give good gifts to those who ask.

- We need to trust in His faithfulness. Luke 11:1-13. Mark 16:17.
- Languages come with distinct cadences, inflections and intonations. Made up gibberish does not.

c. The words or sounds that I make all sound the same.

Yes, some words and phrases may be the same as you may be repeating adoration or requests to God, but we should expect that God will increase our vocabulary the more we use the words which we already have.

d. What is the benefit of praying in tongues if I don't understand it?

God acts on our prayers. There are some things that God would want us to pray for and He wants to act upon. These areas might be unknown to us or they might be areas in which we would be unwilling to pray. (Romans 8:26)

e. Does it need to be interpreted?

If it is our personal prayer, conversation or worship between us and God then it does not need to be interpreted, (1 Corinthians 14:2) but if it is a message to others then it should be interpreted (1 Corinthians 14:11-13).

f. Did Jesus speak in tongues?

No. Jesus did not speak in tongues because He already had perfect communication with God. We do not have this luxury of knowing how to pray perfectly. Hence we need the Holy Spirit to help us (Romans 8:26).

g. What are some hindrances to receiving the prayer language?

- **Many times people overthink, try to articulate, or try to "figure it out."** As such, their mind gets in the way of them speaking out. The faith aspect of speaking in tongues means that we speak, even though we don't understand or it doesn't logically make sense to us.
- **Feeling that this gift is not for me,** it is for other people, ". . . not everyone gets this gift of tongues:" Some people feel that speaking in tongues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is for a select few. They use the verses in 1 Corinthians 12:30 where Paul implies or indicates that "Not All" will speak with tongues. It is important to understand that in this context Paul is referring specifically to the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit and to the leadership gifts of Ephesians 4:11-12. In this context he is not referring to a person's personal prayer language but rather to a message in tongues given to others. Paul does encourage all to speak in tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:5, "I wish you all spoke in tongues . . ."
- **Thinking or feeling that one is unworthy** to receive their personal prayer language. Some believers do not realize that the Holy Spirit is given as a gift (Acts 2:38). They feel that they must perform at a certain level or have their

lives in “order” before they are worthy to receive the Holy Spirit. Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit is given to bring us to sanctification (to be set apart unto God, 1 Peter 1:2) and maturity (John 16:13). He is not given because we are sanctified or mature. Since speaking in tongues is part of the gift of the Holy Spirit, being worthy is not a prerequisite to receive a personal prayer language.

- **Unwilling to step out in faith** - We need to pray and believe that whatever is coming out of our mouth is not garbage, but is from the Holy Spirit. Faith is essential to receiving the Holy Spirit, including our prayer language, (Galatians 3:2; James 1:6-7). Lack of faith is typically shown by an unwillingness to attempt to speak in tongues.
- **Fear**
  - 1) Fear that I might look foolish or sound weird;
  - 2) Fear of losing control;
  - 3) Fear that God might take me to a level of walking with Him that I am not ready or willing to enter into; and
  - 4) Fear of failing: e.g. I have tried before and didn't receive anything and don't want to fail again.
- There is a **misconception that speaking in tongues is not for today**, thinking that it was only something for the early church.

People often quote 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.” (NKJV)

- Here the scripture says that the gifts of tongues, prophecy and words of knowledge are given till what is perfect comes. Some people feel that this verse validates the fact the gifts will cease. They feel that the perfect thing which came was the Bible and when the Bible came there was no longer any need for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. However when Paul writes he never refers to that which is perfect as being the Bible. For the Apostle Paul “that which is perfect” refers either to the Church coming to full maturity or to the return of Jesus Christ. Both of these events are still to happen.
- There are historical references to Christians speaking in tongues all through history, since the time of Jesus' ascension into heaven and even after the existence of the early church. (See Teaching Supplement at [leaders.churchoftherock.ca](http://leaders.churchoftherock.ca))

- **Wrong motives** - Incorrect motives can cause us to miss out on God's blessing for us, (Acts 8:20-23; James 4:3).
- **Bad experiences** - Some individuals have been prayed for to receive their prayer language, or have seen others prayed for, in a disrespectful or negative manner. These experiences may have clouded their willingness to be prayed for, ministered to, or receive their prayer language. Certain church teachings or situations may have left the individual feeling condemned, "second class", or even unsaved because they did not speak in tongues or receive the Holy Spirit. Remember that the Holy Spirit should not be forced upon anyone. Pressure should not be placed upon anyone, making them feel that they have to "do" or "receive" something.
- **Occult activities** - If an individual has been involved in occult activities, séances, hypnotism, tarot card reading, divination, etc. and has not renounced these activities verbally or at least in their heart then this could be an area of their lives that is not fully submitted to the Spirit of God. As such it would be difficult for the Spirit to fill or lead the individual without there being a submission of that prior activity to the Lordship of Jesus (Galatians 5:16-21; James 4:4-10).
- **Unconfessed sin** - Deliberate acts of sin which have not been properly dealt with can affect how God hears our prayers and can cause us to be separated from Him (Psalms 66:18; Galatians 5:16-21).

If any of the above hindrances seem to apply specifically to you, take a moment in prayer to present that area before the Lord Jesus, inviting him into that situation. Be specific about the situation and be confident that God will deal with it in His loving and merciful way (1 John 1:9).