

CHAPTER NINE

HOW TO BE SURE YOU ARE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

There are many benefits of being filled with the Spirit. The initial evidence of being filled with the Spirit is to speak in other tongues. This is not the only evidence of being filled with the Spirit, but it is the initial manifestation of being filled with the Spirit.

In addition to this initial evidence of being filled with the Spirit, you will notice that you are receiving more light and revelation as you study God's Word. You will experience a new boldness and power in witnessing. The presence of God in your heart and your expression of praise and worship will take on new meaning. These are just a few of the benefits of being filled with the Spirit.

In this chapter we are going to concentrate our study on the initial evidence of being filled with the Spirit which is to speak in other tongues.

A. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Let's look at accounts in the book of Acts that describe believers being filled with the Spirit. What do these verses say happened when the New Testament believer received the Holy Spirit?

1. Acts 2:4 _____

2. Acts 10:44-46 _____

3. Acts 19:6 _____

Notice that the believers were speaking in tongues and magnifying God. When you receive the Holy Spirit you will have the supernatural ability to speak in other tongues. Sometimes, Christians have misunderstandings concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the evidence of speaking in tongues. Many people have mistakenly interpreted the Word of God in this area by using their own understanding rather than leaning on God's Word and on His understanding.

B. DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES

To the natural mind, speaking in tongues may seem silly. However, as you study the Word of God on this subject, you will see the great benefits of praying in tongues. Let's look at the Word and dismantle some of the myths concerning speaking in tongues.

What are the different kinds of tongues described in the New Testament?

1. 1 Corinthians 13:1

Tongues of _____ and of _____

2. 1 Corinthians 12:10

_____ kinds of tongues

3. 1 Corinthians 12:28

_____ of tongues

C. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

Many people have lumped all speaking in tongues together into one basket, so to speak, but we can see from Scripture that there are at least two different purposes for speaking in tongues.

The first purpose for speaking in tongues that we can see in the Word of God is the "gift of tongues" which is used for ministry purposes in the local congregation. This gift of tongues requires an interpretation. This might also be called the public manifestation of tongues. This manifestation is used, as the apostle Paul said, for ministry "in the church."

Another purpose for speaking in tongues is for personal ministry or edification. This might be called the private manifestation of tongues and does not necessarily require an interpretation. This manifestation is available for every believer, as the apostle Paul said, "to edify himself."

In the Scriptures listed below, place the word "public" or "private" in the blank space to describe which manifestation of tongues the particular verse implies.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 _____

2. 1 Corinthians 14:2 _____

3. 1 Corinthians 14:14,15 _____

4. 1 Corinthians 14:26 _____

5. 1 Corinthians 14:4 _____

6. 1 Corinthians 14:18 _____

D. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

Have you ever wanted to praise the Lord from your innermost being? Have you ever wanted to thank God for all He has done for you? Have you ever wanted to talk to God "heart to

heart," but you couldn't seem to find the right words? Sometimes our English language is so limited when we want to praise, thank or talk to the Lord.

At these times, speaking in tongues is of great benefit. The Holy Spirit helps us talk to God from our heart of hearts, through speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is also called "a prayer language," or "praying or speaking in the Spirit." When we exercise this prayer language, we are literally by-passing our mind and intellect, and we are praying straight from our spirit to God.

Speaking to God in our prayer language is like having a direct hotline to God, and our prayer, or speech, is not clouded by our thoughts, emotions or feelings. As we pray in the Spirit in tongues, we receive a great spiritual blessing.

1. 1 Corinthians 14:2

Who are we speaking to when we pray in tongues? _____

When we pray in tongues, we have a direct hotline...straight to God!

2. 1 Corinthians 14:4

What happens to someone who prays in tongues? _____

EDIFY: "To charge up." Just like charging up a battery, our spirit will be charged or built up with strength and power as we pray in tongues.

3. Jude 20

How do we build ourselves up on our most holy faith? _____

PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST: One of the best habits you can get into early in your Christian life is that of praying in the Holy Ghost. Pray in tongues, not as a mindless exercise but with the awareness that as you pray in tongues you are literally charging up your spirit and building yourself up on your most holy faith.

Your mind may not understand it and, for that reason, you may be tempted to avoid praying in tongues. But if you will determine to pray in tongues by faith, whether you understand it or not, you will find yourself receiving great spiritual edification and blessing.

4. Romans 8:26

Have you ever needed to pray about something, but you didn't know how to pray? _____

GROANINGS WHICH CANNOT BE UTTERED: One meaning of this phrase, according to P. C. Nelson, noted linguist and Bible doctrine scholar and author, is “groanings that cannot be uttered in articulate speech.” In other words, the groanings can be in a language which our intellect doesn’t comprehend; that is, other tongues.

What will the Holy Spirit do for us as we speak in tongues? _____

E. COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING TONGUES

1. Is it true that not everyone has “the gift of tongues”?

It is true that not everyone has the **public** gift of tongues for ministry in a congregation; however, this is not true concerning the **private** use of tongues for spiritual edification. The private manifestation of tongues is available to everyone, as seen in 1 Corinthians 14:5 where Paul says he would desire for all of us to speak in tongues.

It is clear that Paul is advocating the private use of tongues for personal edification as he had explained in verse 4. However, in the church (in public) he would rather have us prophesy — or speak in tongues with the interpretation. This operation of the public manifestation of the gift of tongues is as the Spirit wills, and everyone does not have this gift.

2. Is there any scriptural basis for “praying or singing in tongues”?

Often, because the Word has been misunderstood in this area, many people have not seen the scriptural basis for what is sometimes called “praying in the Spirit,” or a “private prayer language.” Notice in 1 Corinthians 14:14,15, Paul said he could “pray in an unknown tongue.” Praying in unknown tongues is distinct from speaking in tongues with an interpretation. Praying in tongues is scriptural. Prayer is something that is done privately, or possibly in a group prayer setting, and is different than giving a public utterance in tongues with an interpretation. A person may, or may not, interpret what he prays in tongues. Paul encourages us, however, in 1 Corinthians 14:13, to pray that we may interpret.

Paul went on to explain that when he was praying in the Spirit his spirit prayed and his understanding was unfruitful. When he prayed in the Spirit, or in other tongues, it came from his spirit and his mind did not understand what he was saying. Notice, he also included the personal benefit of singing in the Spirit, or singing in other tongues. To pray and sing in the Spirit — in other tongues — for personal edification is, indeed, scriptural. It is important to mention that, according to 1 Corinthians 14:2, when we speak in unknown tongues for our personal benefit, we are speaking to God, not to men, and not to the devil. When we speak in our prayer language, we are edifying ourselves. This ability to speak in other tongues is available to every Spirit-filled believer and is a different manifestation of speaking in tongues than what is called the gift of tongues for use in the

public assembly, which requires an interpretation.

3. Our church doesn't believe in speaking in tongues.

It is good to respect your church's beliefs and doctrine. However, if your church's beliefs and doctrine ever conflict with the written Word of God, then you need to take sides with the Word of God. Consider this: Jesus referred to believers speaking in tongues when He gave the Great Commission to the Universal Church in Mark 16:17. In 1 Corinthians 14:39 Paul said, **Forbid not to speak with tongues.**

4. I was taught tongues have passed away and are no longer in use.

Some churches teach that when the disciples passed away and when the New Testament was written, the "perfect" came, and tongues ceased, according to 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. First, we need to look at what is meant by the word "perfect." Consider this: If that which is "perfect" has come and tongues have ceased, then, according to this particular passage of Scripture, prophecy and knowledge also would have ceased. We know, however, that knowledge has not ceased but, in fact, it has actually increased. Therefore, we know that the "perfect" has not come, yet. The "perfect" shall come when He, the perfect One, appears in His Second Coming. Until that time comes, tongues, prophecy and knowledge are still with us.

5. I'm afraid if I speak in tongues it will get out of control.

This is a common fear. Some people think that the Holy Spirit will force them to speak in tongues and cause them to blurt out in tongues at some inopportune time. This is a fallacy.

Paul clearly says in 1 Corinthians 14:32 that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. In other words, you have control over your spirit and mouth. God never forces anyone to do anything. He will never embarrass you by causing you to speak in tongues beyond your control. A person can always control the starting and stopping of speaking in tongues. God will never violate your free will.

6. Will the Holy Spirit take over my mouth?

No. Acts 2:4 shows us that **They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and [they] began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.** The Holy Spirit will not take over your mouth. You will do the speaking. The Holy Spirit will give you the utterance. You may feel a sensation in your vocal chords, or you may feel like expressing certain words, or you may have a sense of wanting to talk in what may sound like "baby talk," but you do the speaking. Sometimes there may seem to be one or two words, or maybe a whole sentence, just bubbling up from within you. When you simply yield to that, you will begin to speak in tongues.

7. I'm afraid a demon might speak through me instead of the Holy Spirit.

This also is a common fear. Perhaps the devil uses this thought to keep people from speaking in tongues because he himself fears the power of God released through people who speak in tongues. You can be comforted to know that you will receive a good gift from God, not a demon. Jesus assures us in Luke 11:9-13 that if we ask the Father for the Holy Spirit, He will not give us something else. Read this passage for yourself and see the goodness of God.

8. Do I have to “tarry” for the Holy Spirit?

No. In Luke 24:49, the disciples were told to “tarry,” or to wait, until they were endued with power — the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said this to them because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, or poured out, on the Church. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus to the Church. We don’t have to tarry, or wait, for this great event today because He has already come. We simply receive Him by faith.

9. Does someone have to lay hands on me and pray?

Not necessarily. There are different ways to receive the Holy Spirit, but the main element to receiving the Holy Spirit is to ask and believe. There is a scriptural precedent for receiving the Holy Spirit simply by hearing the Word of God and receiving. There is also scriptural precedent for asking God and receiving without the laying on of hands. In any case, it may help some people release their faith to receive the Holy Spirit when hands are laid on them, but it is not an absolute necessity.

10. Speaking in tongues seems so silly.

To our natural mind, speaking in tongues may seem silly. Our minds naturally want to know and understand everything. However, we have to remember that God is a Spirit, not a mind, and sometimes our minds will not comprehend spiritual things. Perhaps that is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:27, **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.**

F. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 14:15

1. How did Paul say that he would pray?

_____ and _____

2. How did Paul say that he would sing?

_____ and _____

3. How will you sing and pray?

_____ and _____

4. Describe a time when you prayed in the Spirit or sang in the Spirit. What did you do? How did you feel afterwards? _____

If you have never experienced this type of prayer, take time now to pray and sing to the Lord in other tongues.

G. GROUP EXERCISE

Study 1 Corinthians 14 and discuss the public and private manifestation of tongues, as Paul described them. As a group, take time to worship the Lord together in singing and speaking in tongues.

Ask God to teach you about the gift of tongues and about how to yield to the Holy Spirit in the operation of the public and private use of tongues. In a small group setting where the atmosphere is reverent and expectant, the Lord will manifest Himself in a very special way and will teach you how to flow with the Holy Spirit in this area.