

GIFTS
I Cor. 12:1

Paul is writing to one of the most carnal churches in the New Testament.

The church at Corinth was full of problems.

Paul tries to deal with these problems.

Division	chap. 1:1-17	
Following man's philosophy		chap. 1:18-31
Immature	chap. 3	
Allowing immorality to continue		chap. 5
Suing each other	chap. 6	
Marriage problems	chap. 7	
Mixing law and grace	chap. 8-10	
Low standards	chap. 11:1-16	
Abusing Communion	chap. 11:17-34	
Confused about spiritual gifts	chap. 12-14	
Confused about resurrection	chap. 15	
Confused about offerings	chap. 16	

Paul tries to help this messed up church with the subject of spiritual gifts.

1. **THE DEFINITION OF A SPIRITUAL GIFT** WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL GIFT?

WHAT A SPIRITUAL GIFT ISN'T...

IT ISN'T THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 2:3 and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Spirit is referred to as a gift but that is different than spiritual gifts.

IT ISN'T AN OFFICE IN A CHURCH

Many people seem to think that they aren't needed if they don't have an office in the church.

IT ISN'T A CALLING

IT ISN'T A NATURAL TALENT

A natural talent is something we are born with.

A spiritual gift is something we receive at salvation.

IT ISN'T THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT Gal. 5:22,23

The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence that we are filled by the Holy Spirit.

Like the fruit in a garden is the evidence that we have done what is required in growing a garden, so is the fruit of the Spirit.

IT ISN'T SPIRITUALITY

The most ungodly saved person on earth still has their spiritual gift.

Paul said to these ungodly Corinthians, "So that ye come behind in no gift..." (I Cor. 1:7)

WHAT A SPIRITUAL GIFT IS ...

A SUPERNATURAL ABILITY GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER AT THE MOMENT OF THEIR SALVATION.

Since this is something that comes from the Lord we have no reason for pride.

It is something He gives us.

A. **EVERY BELIEVER HAS AT LEAST ONE GIFT**

1 Cor. 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Don't think you can't do anything for the Lord.

When we think we can't do anything that isn't the Lord speaking.

I Cor. 12:11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Eph. 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The worse member in the church has some gift that they could use if they would only do it.

He has hand picked you for some special task and equipped you to do it with His power.

B. **WE DO NOT CHOOSE OUR OWN GIFT**

The Holy Spirit gives the gifts as He desires.

I Cor. 12:11dividing to every man severally as he will.

1 Cor. 12:31, seems to contradict this because Paul tells us to “covet (or desire) the best gifts”. We must realize that Paul is speaking to the whole church in I Cor. 12:11. He is telling a church that they should want people in the church who have the gifts that would help the entire church the most. He is not telling an individual that they should want any particular gift.

C. **NO ONE HAS ALL THE GIFTS** I Cor. 12:8-11

Since no one has all the gifts all Christians must depend on someone else. No one can say that they don't need anyone.

1 Cor. 12:21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
Like our hands depend on our arms etc

D. **YOU CANNOT LOSE YOUR GIFT**

The “use it or lose it” theory is not scriptural.

Rom. 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

The Corinthians were a prime example of this.

If anyone could ever lose their gifts surely they would have.

2. **THE DESIGN OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS** WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF GIFTS

TO GLORIFY CHRIST

1 Peter 4:11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

TO EDIFY CHRISTIANS

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

To “edify” means to build up or to bring to maturity.

We all have a gift that will, when used properly, help someone else.

Those people need our help.

The gifts were not for selfish benefit. Example... The gift of giving was not given to make the person rich. The gift of exhortation was not given to make a person popular.

Do you know what your gift is?

Are you using it as the Lord designed it to be used?

There may be someone who has the same gift as you do but no one on earth can use it as you can. That means that there are some things that only you can do.

3. **THE DANGERS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS** “be ignorant” = to not know

The Corinthians were so confused about gifts that they made many mistakes. We can make the same mistakes they did.

As long as there is a devil he will do his best to hinder the work of God. He does that many times by confusing God's people.

Since this is true, there are some real dangers we must beware of when it comes to spiritual gifts.

A. **THINKING ONE GIFT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANOTHER**

They classified the importance of gifts by how visible or how exciting the gift was. They thought the most visible gifts were the most important.

Many people are doing the same thing today. That is one reason why there is such an emphasis on the gift of tongues today.

Since the Holy Spirit gives all the gifts, they are all of equal importance.

1 Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

The church is like our body. We need ALL our members and none of them are unimportant.

1 Corinthians 12:14-15 For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

If all members were the same, some things would not get done.

1 Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

The eye cannot do what the ears do.

No one can do your job like you can.

Even the most feeble are needed.

1 Corinthians 12:23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness.

We cover the less attractive parts of our bodies and therefore they become the most appealing.

God gives spiritual gifts to those who, by the world's point of view, are less appealing.

The person with the least to offer humanly speaking can be used greatly when used by the Lord in their area of service.

B. NOT USING THE GIFTS WE HAVE

God has equipped every one of us for some type of service and yet we don't see very many Christians really active for the Lord.

We can't use the excuse of not being able to do anything because God has equipped us to do SOMETHING.

It's a shame to have a God-given ability and not use it.

There used to be a brick house near where we lived that was empty. It looked new, to begin with but it eventually fell because it wasn't used.

C. NOT DOING THE WORK OF THE GIFTS WE DON'T HAVE

We may get the idea that all we have to do is that particular work that is related to our gift.

"Well, I have the gift of teaching, so I don't have to give". "I don't have the gift of evangelism, so I don't have to witness". Nothing could be further from the truth.

The gifts we have will be the area of service in which the Lord uses us the greatest but we are not excused from other ways of serving Him.

We are ALL commanded to give, witness, help, have faith whether we have those gifts or not.

D. NOT USING OUR GIFT PROPERLY

We can use our gifts for other than the right reasons. We are to use the gifts God has given us in love. We are to do what we do because we love Him and the ones we minister to.

If the Lord just wanted servants He could have made robots. He wants us to serve in love. He wants us to really care.

E. NOT UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE WITH GIFTS DIFFERENT THAN OUR OWN

If we aren't careful, we will have trouble with the fact that people are so different than we are.

A person who doesn't have the gift of faith may misunderstand someone with that gift. They may think of them as reckless or wasteful.

A person with the gift of giving may misunderstand someone without that gift. They see them as being tight or unloving.

That's the beauty of the body of Christ. God has put a bunch of different people together to make a balanced whole.

F. TAKING CREDIT TO OURSELVES

1 Corinthians 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

No one can rightly say, "look what I have done".

That which we are able to accomplish is not by our own personal abilities or know-how.

If anything good is done through us, it will be by the ability that He placed in us. That doesn't help our ego.

To make matters worse, the ability He placed in us is useless unless the Holy Spirit works. He must anoint us as we do the work He gifted us to do.

An example of this would be a person with the gift of evangelism. The gift of evangelism is the ability to successfully reach people with the gospel. However, a person with that gift can talk until they are blue in the face with no effect unless the Holy Spirit moves to convict the sinner they are talking to.

G. NOT THINKING WE ARE IMPORTANT

The best gift for you is the one God has given you. There are no unimportant gifts.

The bottom line is, it is very important to know and to use your gift.

4. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The following is a description of spiritual gifts when used properly by a person who is right with the Lord and yielded to Him.

The gifts can be divided into two groups. The permanent and the temporary.

THE PERMANENT GIFTS

I Cor. 12:8-10

1. WISDOM v. 8

The ability to apply God's Word to the situations of life.

Wisdom is different than being smart or being informed. "Smart" means, "I know, I have information". Wisdom means, "I know how to use the information I have".

This is more than just knowing what the Bible says. A person can know it from cover to cover and not know how to put it to practice.

Notice, it says "the WORD of wisdom". This reveals the idea of speaking or communicating. Again, we see the gifts are given to help others.

The person doesn't have this gift just to help them apply God's Word for their own life but to also be a help to someone else.

2. FAITH v. 9

The ability to believe and receive great things from God.

Being able to lay hold of God's promises and believe no matter what the circumstances. This person would say, "if God said it, that's good enough for me".

When all odds are against them, they still believe. When others have gotten discouraged and given up, this person isn't even shaken.

This type of person seems to enjoy the impossible. The greater the impossibility, the greater the victory.

3. DISCERNMENT v. 10

The ability to distinguish between demonic, human, or divine works.

This gift was especially needed during the early church days since they didn't have the completed Bible.

However, we certainly need this gift today. Many claim to be from God and speaking for God in our day. It is easy to be deceived by these people. Therefore, it is vitally important that someone be able to determine if they are from God.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

So many Christians are so gullible today that it is ridiculous.

We need to be able to discern truth from error and true from false. God has equipped some to do that.

I Cor. 12:28

4. TEACHING v. 28

The ability to communicate clearly God's Word.

The person with this gift has the ability to open up the Word to others and explain what it says.

This person may not be a Sunday School teacher.

This person usually loves the Bible and enjoys learning. They aren't satisfied with just learning, they want to share what they learn with someone.

This person wants to see others grow in the Lord.

5. HELPS v. 28

The ability to assist and support people in practical ways.

The name explains this gift. It means, to do a service....to wait on....take care of.

It also means, to take hold of. Like helping to pick up a load.

The person with this gift has the ability to help someone in times of need.

This person is usually sensitive to the needs of others. When they discover someone needs help, they step in with what is needed.

The amazing thing about the person with this gift is their ability to assist without getting in the way, offending, or becoming a nuisance to the person in need. Most people would be more of a nuisance than help when someone is going through difficulty.

This gift may be exercised by mowing a yard for a person who is sick....fixing a meal for a family who has had a death....running an errand for an elderly person.

Every church needs this type of person for the every day maintenance and upkeep.

The ones with this gift are not usually the ones in the limelight but no church could function without them.

6. GOVERNMENTS v. 28

The ability to organize and promote either people or projects.

This gift means = to lead.

This word means to pilot a ship. Like the captain who directs the ship through dangerous rocks and feels and brings it safely into harbor.

This person can bring order out of chaos.

This person can step in and say, "OK, we need to do this and this. You take that and go there and you---". They do it in a way that doesn't make people mad. They aren't overbearing or a dictator.

Every church needs this type of person. This gift isn't needed just by the pastor but someone to organize different programs.

4. THE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

PERMANENT GIFTS

WISDOM / FAITH / DISCERNMENT / TEACHING / HELPS / GOVERNMENTS

Rom. 12:6-8

7. EXHORTATION v. 8

The ability to deliver challenging and encouraging words that prompt action.

The person with this gift has the ability to encourage and motivate others. They are the type who sees the positive side of circumstances.

This is the type of person who wants to see things get done. They aren't satisfied with just talking about what ought to be done or merely saying something "should" be done. They want to go into action and get it done.

They aren't satisfied with just knowing what the Bible says, they want to know how to do what the Bible says.

A teacher or preacher may tell us that we need to study the Bible but the person with the gift of exhortation will tell us "how" to study the Bible.

This type of person will not just give out Biblical facts, they make you "want" to do what the Bible teaches.

8. GIVING v. 8

The ability to accumulate and give money for God's glory.

The person with this gift usually delights in giving. They really enjoy being able to give.

Many times (though not always) this person is well off financially because God can trust them with money.

This person is touched by the needs of others and has a desire to help. The person with this gift must be careful because there will be people who prey on their emotions.

9. MERCY-SHOWING v. 8

The ability to minister to those that are sick, struggling, or in sorrow.

This a person who can enter into the feelings of others. They have the ability to comfort and encourage those who are going through difficult times.

They can go into a home where there's sorrow or sickness and know exactly what to say or not say. A simple smile from this person will do more good than an hour of talking from someone without this gift.

I'm not saying they don't cry. They weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice but even their weeping is an encouragement to those who are hurting.

Eph. 4:11

10. EVANGELISM

The ability to point the lost to Christ and to encourage others to do the same.

This person may not be a preacher but one who evangelizes.

This person has a driving desire to see lost people get saved. They seem to know just what to say and when to say it when talking with a lost person.

11. PASTOR-TEACHER v. 11

The ability to preach and teach the Word of God and feed and lead the flock of God.

This term has a double meaning. It means to "lead" or to "rule" and it also means to "teach"

It has the idea of a shepherd who watches over the flock over which he has authority. He loves them, he leads them, he protects them, he feeds them.

Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1 Ti 3:2 ...apt to teach;

1 Ti 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

The person with this gift may not be a pastor. Many preachers have this gift but have not yet gotten a church. Unfortunately, some are pastors but do not have this gift.

TEMPORARY GIFTS

The term "temporary" implies exactly what it sounds like. These gifts were meant to be temporary.

There came a time when these gifts ceased. They were meant for a certain length of time and for a specific purpose. Once this time came, they were no longer given because they were no longer needed.

Some people have difficulty calling anything that God does "temporary".

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

It is true, HE never changes but the way He deals with mankind does change.

Heb 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...

Everyone knows there is a vast difference between God's dealing with man in the Old Testament than how He deals with man in the New Testament.

This doesn't mean that God has changed. He is the same God but He deals with man in a totally different manner.

So, it isn't wrong for us to think of God as giving something that would be meant to be temporary.

WHY WOULD GOD GIVE TEMPORARY GIFTS?

To answer that question, we must realize what was happening during the time these gifts were given.

They lived in a time that is commonly called the "Transition Period". This is referring to the time between the Old and New Testaments. This is the period between the time of Law and the time of Grace. There was a time of transition or moving from Law to Grace.

As far as their religious practice, they didn't go to bed one night and wake up the next day under Grace. They had been offering sacrifices and abiding by the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. The death and resurrection of Christ fulfilled the law and therefore they ceased these practices.

So, now there is a new message and new religious practice.

During this time, they had great difficulty in determining if what they were hearing was true or false, right or wrong. They couldn't look into the Old Testament Law for guidance and the New Testament wasn't completed at the time.

So, how did they know what was right or wrong? When they heard someone preaching, they didn't have the Bible to go to to see if they were telling the truth.

God gave these gifts to prove to those who were listening and watching that the early church disciples were speaking the truth.

These gifts were a "sign" to those listening that they were hearing the truth. For that reason, the temporary gifts are sometimes called "sign" gifts.

For example...Here's a man preaching about Grace. He is talking about how Jesus rose from the dead and how the Holy Spirit now lives in the heart of those who trust Him.

How do those hearing him know that they are hearing the truth? God gives that preacher a gift like the gift of healing. He doesn't just preach, but God heals through him, and those listening and watching know that it is a message of God.

The "sign" confirms the fact that he was God's man with God's message. It's like the Lord is doing this miracle through this man to say to those who are listening, "this is my messenger, you can believe him".

Once the New Testament was complete, the need for these gifts ended. Why, because people were supposed to go to the Bible to determine if what they were hearing was the truth. They didn't need miracles to prove it to them.

1. **KNOWLEDGE** I Cor. 12:8

The ability to understand and proclaim the mysteries of God's will.

We can't be certain but it seems as though this gift had to do with receiving and penning the Holy Scripture as God gave the inspired Word of God.

We'll look at this gift in greater detail later in this study and determine why I believe it was a temporary gift.

2. **HEALING** I Cor. 12:9

The ability to instantly restore complete health, whether that sickness was physical, mental, or demonic.

A. **WHAT WERE THE SIGNS OF THE GIFTS OF HEALING?**

1. **THOSE WITH THIS GIFT COULD HEAL BY SPEAKING OR TOUCHING**

Ac 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Ac 9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

Ac 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Ac 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

Ac 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Ac 19:11–12 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Ac 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

Ac 28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

2. **THOSE WITH THIS GIFT COULD HEAL INSTANTLY**

No where in Scripture do we find a sick person told that their healing has started and will be complete later. The only example that comes close is in Mk. 8:24.

Mk 8:24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

Jesus healed this man in two stages for a reason. He was trying to use this to show His disciples how slowly they were seeing who He was.

3. **THOSE WITH THIS GIFT COULD HEAL TOTALLY**

There were no partial or temporary healings in the Bible. We don't see people slowly standing and shuffling along as with those who claim to have the gift of healing today. Those who were healed were immediately able to run and jump.

Ac 3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

B. **IS THE GIFT OF HEALING FOR TODAY?**

I believe the gift of healing has ceased and is no longer a viable gift for our day for the following reasons.

1. **THERE IS NO NEED FOR CONFIRMING GIFTS**

We have the completed Word of God to help us determine if someone is speaking the Truth.

2. **THE GIFT OF HEALING IS USED LESS AS THE BOOK OF ACTS COMES TO AN END**

The argument of silence is one we dare not ignore. If this gift was still a viable gift, why don't we find it being used more in any of the epistles? Since the epistles are letters written to the church dealing with church issues and Christian life, you would expect this gift to be used many times if it was still a viable gift.

3. **WE SEE MANY GODLY PEOPLE IN SCRIPTURE WHO STAYED SICK**

Epaphroditus was sick.

Php 2:26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

He was healed later but it is clear that his healing was an answer to prayer and not done through someone with the gift of healing.

Php 2:27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him...

It seems clear that this gift had ceased even before all the Apostles died. Paul could not heal his friend Trophimus.

2 Ti 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

If the gift of healing had still been viable, Paul would certainly have healed this dear man of God.

Even Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7-9).

In the book of James, those who are sick are admonished to call for the elders and have them pray. There is nothing said about calling on someone with the gift of healing.

Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

If healing is to come, it will be a result of answered prayer and not the result of the gift of healing being used.

Jas 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up

4. MODERN "DIVINE HEALERS" DON'T MEET THE BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS

C. **WHAT ABOUT THE SO-CALLED DIVINE HEALERS OF OUR DAY?**

MANY ARE FAKES

Many are nothing more than con-artists who use the sick to get rich and famous.

MANY ARE SINCERE BUT DECEIVED

Some people believe totally in divine healing. Some really believe they have this gift. They long for God to use them to help those who are suffering.

Some are sick and really believe God wants them to be well. They really believe it is God's will for them to be healed because that is what they have been told.

Many times, the excitement of a "healing" meeting can bring about such emotion that these people actually do feel better temporarily.

There are times when the sickness is psychosomatic. When they get in the environment of a "healing" meeting" the symptoms disappear because they have temporary relief of the problem that caused the "sickness" to begin with.

Most of the, so-called healings of today are on type of diseases that cannot be seen. For instance, the "healer" will claim that the person has cancer but they have been healed.

Where are the healings where the person has an obvious and visible problem? Where are the people who can touch withered arms and make them whole? Where are the ones who can open blinded eyes?

Why do these "healers" not go to the hospitals if they do indeed have this wonderful gift?

THE DEVIL DOES IT

Some may wonder if the devil even has the power to heal. It would certainly seem that he would have this power since we see him producing storms, sickness, war and so many other things in Scripture. Since he has transformed himself into an angel of light to deceive people, it would not seem impossible for him to be willing to heal someone to accomplish his evil goal.

Mt 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Some may wonder if the devil would be willing to actually heal someone. Of course, he would if he would be able to mislead and deceive someone in the process.

Just to clarify, I am not saying for an instant that I don't believe that God can heal. I am not implying that I believe that God won't heal in our day. I am simply saying that I believe He heals as an answer to prayer or as a work of His own sovereign purpose and plan and not through someone with a gift of healing like we see in the early church days.

3. **MIRACLES** I Cor. 12:10

The ability to perform events that were beyond the realm of nature.

We know that Jesus was able to perform works that were beyond the realm of nature.

He calmed the sea. Mk 4:39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

He fed over 5,000 with a little boy's lunch. Mt 14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

He raised the dead. Jn 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

But, the early church disciples could do works that would have to be described as miracles.

Ac 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

Paul raised the dead. Ac 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

Paul put blindness on Bar-Jesus. Ac 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Some people would try to convince us that God has always, consistently done miracles through men. A close investigation of Scripture will prove that to not be the case.

In fact, if we search the entire Bible, we will find 3 times in Biblical history where we see God using men to perform miracles.

These times of miracles start quickly and end almost as quickly as they began. When each of these periods ended the miracles being done through man ceased.

I am not saying that God stopped doing the miraculous. I am saying that He stopped doing the miraculous through a man.

Why would God do such a thing? In each of these periods God was giving these men the ability to perform miracles to prove two things.

First.....These men were indeed sent by God.

Second....These men were indeed preaching the message of God.

Let's take a look at these three periods.

ONE....THE TIME OF MOSES Ex. 4:1-9

Moses tells God that the people of Israel won't believe that He sent him to speak to them.

God turns the rod to a snake and then back into a rod. He turns Moses' hand leprous and then makes it whole. God told Moses that he would send him to Israel and the miracles he would do would be PROOF that he had indeed been sent by God.

Ex 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

WHEN MOSES DIED, MIRACLES BEING DONE THROUGH MAN CEASED.

The important thing to realize is, when Moses died, the miracles ceased. God still works miracles after his death but as far as there being miracles done through a man, it did not happen.

TWO....THE TIME OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA

I Kgs. 16:33, tells us why God sent Elijah and Elisha working miracles. Ahab was king of the northern kingdom. He was an ungodly man who grieved the heart of God.

1 Ki 16:33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

God sent these two prophets to preach the truth and to get rid of Ahab and Jezebel.

WHEN ELISHA DIED, MIRACLES DONE THROUGH MAN CEASED.

We see them doing miracles all through their ministries but it is interesting to note that after Jezebel's death, we see no more miracles being done through man.

Some have said that Elisha raised a man from the dead in II Kgs. 13:21.

2 Ki 13:21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

It is clear, however that Elisha had nothing to do with this miracle because he was already dead. This miracle was done by God and not by any man.

Notice the testimony of the widow.

1 Ki 17:24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

The miracle did exactly what God desired. It caused her to realize that Elijah was A MAN OF GOD and he was PREACHING THE TRUTH OF GOD.

THREE.....THE TIME OF JESUS AND THE APOSTLES

If there has ever been a time when God wanted the world to believe "this is God's man and preaching God's message", it was when Jesus and the disciples came.

So, Jesus came preaching the truth and doing miracles to prove He was who He claimed to be.

Ac 2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

The same is true of the Apostles. The people of that day needed proof that what they were hearing was the truth of God.

Ac 4:29-30 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

2 Co 12:12 Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

As with the other two periods of miracles, when the Apostles died, God ceased doing miracles through men.

Heb 2:3-4 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

According to church history, this took place around the first century.

We do not need these works in our day because we have the complete Word of God at our disposal. When we want to know if the person we are listening to is a man of God and preaching the truth of God, we simply go to the Bible to find out. If what they say lines up with the Bible, it is true. If it doesn't, it is error no matter who it is that is speaking.

2 Pe 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

In 2 Pet. 1:18, Peter is describing how they were eye witnesses of Jesus and heard a voice speak from heaven. But, He also says we have a "more sure word". He is making sure we understand that the Word of God is more sure than any miracle or sign.

We must recognize that the devil can do signs and wonders (Mt. 24:24) so we must not follow after such things.

4. **PROPHECY** I Cor. 12:10

The ability to receive and speak the truth which has been given by direct revelation from God.

This gift dealt with the ability to speak things as yet unknown. It was a revelatory gift.

Eph 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

A. **THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**

The gift of prophecy was given to reveal truth that had not yet been revealed or known.

IT WASN'T MERELY PREACHING

Some people seem to think that the gift of prophecy was merely the ability to preach.

The following verses list the gift of prophecy AND the gift of teaching in the same verse. There is no gift of "preaching" mentioned in the Bible. The gift of teaching is the closest thing to it. Since the gift of prophecy and the gift of teaching are both mentioned in this one verse, there must be a difference between the two.

Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers;

1 Cor 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers

A simple way to understand the difference between teaching and prophecy would be, the teacher or preacher takes a text of Scripture and expounds it. The person who prophecies takes no text but is speaking a direct message from God. His message is a revelation that comes straight from the Lord.

With this in mind, it is no wonder that I Cor. 14:29 says "let the other judge". Those listening would need to have great discernment to determine whether the man they were listening to was speaking the truth.

IT WASN'T MERELY PREDICTING

Many people think that prophecy is the ability to foretell the future. There is no doubt that there are times when prophecy means to predict the future.

Acts 11:27-28 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Ac 21:10-11 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

However, we need to recognize the fact that prophecy was not just foretelling or predicting some future event, it was "forth-telling" also.

"Forthtelling" in this context is the ability to speak truth that had come directly from God. It was a gift to help people be more spiritual and to teach them how to walk with the Lord.

1 Co 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Notice, there is nothing mentioned in this verse about predicting the future.

2 Pe 1:20-21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

These verses tell us that the Scriptures came to us by God speaking to men and they wrote down what God said. These verses make it very clear that "prophecy" can be speaking of receiving the Word of God through the Spirit of God and not telling the future.

2. THE PRACTICE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

How was it used while it was still a viable gift? This is one of the gifts that had very strict guidelines that had to be followed.

PROPHECY MUST AGREE WITH THE REVEALED WORD

1 Corinthians 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Paul says that if a man claims to be a prophet, what he speaks has to agree with what we are writing in the Word of God. If he does not agree, he is not God's spokesman and he should not be listened to.

PROPHECY MUST ADHERE TO SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES WHEN USED IN THE CHURCH

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

One interesting note, verse 32 says "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets". That tells us that the men were not overcome by some overwhelming power that they could not resist. There are some today who claim they are overtaken by some force that they cannot control. This is not how the Holy Spirit works.

3. THE PASSING OF THIS GIFT

There came a time when the gift of prophecy ceased. There is no need to further revelation since we have the completed Scripture. God has revealed everything He is going to in the Word of God. Therefore, the need for "prophecy" in that sense, has ceased.

In our day, the Holy Spirit reveals truth to us but that truth comes from the Bible.

Jn 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

We do not need further new revelation from God in our day. We don't have to wonder if we have the full revelation of God. We have no reason to expect Him to change it or update it. The Word of God is not all God knows but it is all He wants us to know until we see Him.

Revelation 22:18-19, clearly teach that inspiration has ended. When John wrote these last words in the book of Revelation, God said...."I am finished".

Some say this gift is still active today because of what we find in 1 Th 5:20. In that verse, Paul says, "Despise not prophesyings".

"Despise" means "to set at naught" or "to take lightly". Paul warns the church in Thessalonica to not take prophecies lightly. Of course, Paul would say to not despise prophecy. It was a viable gift at that time and was to be used in the church to edify the believers.

Eph. 2:20 teaches us that the gift of prophecy was a foundational gift. I mean by that, it was a gift that was used to reveal new truth from God until the New Testament could be completed.

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

The foundation of a building is built once and then left to complete the building. That does not mean it is no longer important. The entire building continues to be dependant upon it but it is built only once, never to be repeated.

5. **TONGUES** I Cor. 12:10

The ability to speak in a foreign language which the speaker had not previously learned or known.

The gift of tongues was a tool that God used to speak the truth to people.

Before we can determine what the purpose of the gifts of tongues was, we must determine what the gift was, to begin with.

As already stated, the gift of tongues was the ability to speak in a language that the speaker did not know and had not learned. This makes it clear that the speaker was speaking in a human language.

How do we know that the person speaking in tongues was speaking a known human language?

THE WORD "TONGUES" MEANS LANGUAGES

The Greek word translated "tongues" is GLOSSA. This word means "languages".

EVERY TIME THE GIFT IS USED RIGHTLY IT IS CLEARLY A KNOWN LANGUAGE

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Ac 2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

The word translated in verse 4 as "tongues" is the very same Greek word that is translated as "language" in verse 6.

To understand what is taking place in these verses, we need to realize that this is dealing with the day of Pentecost. Acts 2.5 tells us that Jerusalem was filled with people from every nation during this ceremony.

Acts 2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Ac 2:11we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

They said they heard them speaking "the wonderful works of God". This tells us that they understood what was being spoken. It was not some "angelic" language that was not known by man.

To summarize.....It is very clear that these tongues were known human languages.

Verse 5 tells us that there were men out of every nation present.

Verse 6 and verse 8 make it clear that they heard their own language.

Acts 10:44-47 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

In the above verses, it says they heard them "magnify" God. How did they know they were magnifying God unless they were speaking in a language that they could understand?

In verse 47, Peter speaks of how these people had received the Holy Spirit "as well as we". He is saying the same thing happened to these people as happened to us at Pentecost. In other words, they were speaking in known languages just like happened at Pentecost. He says the same thing in Acts 11:15 and 15:8.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

There is no indication that this is any different than in the other cases that we have already looked at.

1 Corinthians 12:10 ...to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

The same Greek word for tongues is used here. Once again, when the gift of tongues was used rightly, it was a known human language.

BECAUSE OF WHAT I COR. 14:21 TEACHES

In verse 21 Paul quotes Isa. 28:11 and tied that verse into the gift of tongues. In Isa. 28:11 a normal human language is being referred to. It is speaking about the Assyrians. We'll look at this in greater detail later in this study.

THE WORD "INTERPRETATION" MEANS TO TRANSLATE

The gift of interpretation was used when someone spoke in tongues. The person speaking in tongues would speak and then the one with the gift of interpretation would interpret or translate what the tongue speaker said.

To interpret means to translate from one language to another. If tongues was not a known human language it could not be translated into another language.

A. **THE PURPOSE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES**

What was this gift for? Why did God give this gift to begin with?

1. TO CONFIRM THE MAN AND THE MESSAGE OF GOD

As with all the other temporary gifts, it was to confirm to those listening that the man speaking was a man of God and his message was the message of God.

2. TO SPEAK THE TRUTH TO PEOPLE OF OTHER LANGUAGES

3. TO WARN LOST ISRAEL

The gift of tongues was a sign to unbelievers and not to believers. New Testament tongues were a sign to unbelieving Israel.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22 In the law it is written, With *men of other tongues* and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Isaiah 28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

God had spoken to Israel and they had refused to listen. He sent men like Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, but they refused to give heed to His message.

When He spoke to them clearly in a way they could understand, Israel ignored God. So, He sent a nation who spoke a language they did not understand. He is saying in essence, if you won't listen when I speak to you in a way you could understand, I'll speak in a way that you can't understand.

The Assyrians came through speaking in a language that Israel did not understand. But, they understood the fact that God was judging them for their sin.

We must realize, Paul, connects this Old Testament event with what was going on in his day.

The sign was that judgment was coming because they had rejected His word.

So it was in Paul's day. God had spoken to Israel once again. He had sent John the Baptist and rejected his message. God even sent His very Son. God sent the disciples and once, again Israel did not listen.

Acts 2:22-23 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

As a result, God turned from Israel and to the Gentiles. Once again, God is going to judge His people for not listening.

It is important to recognize that every instance of tongues being spoken is connected to the Jews in some way.

I believe that the primary message spoken by those who spoke in tongues was for Israel to repent. Maybe that is why so many Jews got saved on the day of Pentecost. They heard the message and repented. Peter preached and, for a change, they listened.

B. **THE PERVERSION OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES**

Anything man touches he defiles. So it was with the gift of tongues.

The Corinthians had perverted this wonderful gift. We find Paul dealing with this abuse in I Corinthians. In this book, Paul is dealing with several problems the Corinthians had, one of which was the gift of tongues.

It's no wonder that Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:1 "Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." They were ignorant of the gifts and their purpose.

Many of the people in the church of Corinth wanted to bring glory to themselves. Because of this, they loved the noticeable gifts. They longed for the exciting gifts and desired those that would bring attention to themselves. Of course, this grieved the Lord.

They had elevated the gift of tongues and tried to make it something the Lord never intended it to be.

Many try to do the same thing today. Some say that the gift of tongues is a sign that you have been filled with the Holy Spirit. Some even go so far as to say that you cannot be saved unless you have spoken in tongues.

And yet, we must remember, Jesus never spoke in tongues. He was certainly filled with the Spirit and was certainly in the absolute center of the Father's will.

John the Baptist never spoke in tongues and the Bible says that he was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb.

Lk 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

If speaking in tongues is a sign that a person is filled with the Spirit, certainly we would have to assume this would be an experience for every believer. But, 1 Corinthians 12:30 teaches that all don't speak in tongues and even makes it clear that all aren't supposed to.

1 Cor. 12:30 says, "Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

Paul's question demands a negative response. He is intended to make the point that all do not speak in tongues.

Because of these misunderstandings about tongues, God leads Paul to describe this gift and how it was to be used.

He makes it abundantly clear that tongues was not some "special" gift that should be elevated above the other gifts. In fact, he points out that when in a church setting, the gift of tongues would actually be less desirable.

He even shows that other gifts can accomplish more than the gifts of tongues can.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy.

Paul says it's right to desire gifts but they should desire those gifts that would edify the church. That's why he tells them that they should desire to "prophecy" more than they should desire to speak in tongues. When someone prophesied they were speaking in their own language, so the church understood and received help.

1 Corinthians 14:2-3 For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Paul is rebuking them for abusing the gift of tongues in the church services. It seems as though they were speaking in tongues even though no one in the congregation spoke that particular language. Since that was the case, no one understood what was said and no one was helped by what they said.

1 Corinthians 14:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

Of course, he would say this. This gift was a viable gift at the time. But, even then, he says that he would rather that they prophecy (or speak in a language that everyone could understand) so that more people be helped.

In verses 6-11, He gives illustrations to make his point. He says that any sound we hear must be familiar to us if we are to receive any benefit.

In verse 7, he uses the example of a musical instrument to make his point. He says in essence if the musician just plays a bunch of notes that don't go together it is just a big mess and no one enjoys it. So it is with someone speaking in tongues if no one understands the language. It doesn't make any sense to them.

In verse 8, he uses the example of a trumpet. Like in our modern military, in Paul's day, the trumpet was used to communicate. There was a distinct sound for each command. If the trumpet made a sound that no one understood, they would have no idea what they were supposed to do. The result would be total confusion.

So it is with someone speaking in tongues when there is no one there who speaks that language. No one would receive any help and the result would be confusion.

In verses 10-11, Paul points out that every language has a purpose. If you can't understand what is being spoken the words are useless.

In verse 13, Paul says, if you are going to speak in tongues in the church ask God to let you interpret so someone will understand and get some help.

In verses 18-19, Paul says that he speaks in tongues more than all of them and he is glad that he does but when in the church, speaking in a language that everyone can understand is more valuable.

C. THE PRACTICE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

1. THE GIFT OF TONGUES WAS SUPPOSED TO BE USED IN LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

They were using this wonderful gift to bring attention to themselves. They had the idea that the gifts of tongues was one of the most important gifts. They believed that the ones who had this gift were more spiritual than those who had other gifts.

2. THERE WAS TO BE ONLY ONE TONGUE SPEAKER AT A TIME

1 Corinthians 14:27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that by* course; and let one interpret.

3. THERE WAS NOT TO BE MORE THAN THREE SPEAKING IN TONGUES DURING ANY GIVEN SERVICE

1 Corinthians 14:27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three...

4. IF THERE WAS NO ONE THERE WITH THE GIFT OF INTERPRETATION, THERE WAS TO BE NO TONGUES SPOKEN

God wasn't trying to keep people in the dark. He wanted to get the message across. Therefore, He gave the gift of interpretation in order

How did they know if someone was there that could interpret? They had better know because God said to not speak in tongues if no one was there to interpret.

5. NO WOMEN WERE TO SPEAK IN TONGUES

1 Co 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

In today's tongue movement much, if not most of those who speak in tongues, are women.

D. THE PASSING OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

There seems to be sufficient evidence to say that the gift of tongues has ceased and therefore is not a gift that is viable in our day.

Why do I say this?

1. THE GIFT OF TONGUES IS NOT MENTIONED IN MUCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

If it was a gift that would continue, it looks like it would be mentioned more. Of course, this alone is not reason enough for us to determine for certain that tongues have ceased.

2. TONGUES IS THE SIGN OF JUDGMENT ON UNBELIEVING ISRAEL

As we discussed earlier, the gift of tongues was a sign to unbelieving Israel that God was about to judge them for refusing to hear Him.

This judgment took place in 70 AD and therefore the sign was no longer needed. Just like the star that was a sign of His birth (Lk. 2:12) and was not seen again. It was a sign that was used to mark His birth and once its purpose was accomplished, it was not seen again.

3. TONGUES WAS A CONFIRMING GIFT

The gift of tongues confirmed that the man speaking was God's man speaking God's message. We do not need any confirming gifts today because we have the Bible to determine if what we are hearing is the Word of God.

4. HISTORY RECORDS THAT TONGUES CEASED

Church history reveals that tongues ceased by 100 AD. According to historians, from that time until the early 1900s no tongues were being spoken by Christians.

5. I CORINTHIANS TEACHES THAT TONGUES WOULD CEASE

In I Corinthians 13, Paul makes the point that love is the most important thing. One reason he used to make his point is the fact that love is permanent. He continues by saying that love is permanent but gifts are temporary.

In 1 Corinthians 13:8, he says, "Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away."

He stated that charity (love) would never fail (end) but he says very definitely that "prophecies, tongues and knowledge" will cease or end. The question we must address is, when will these things cease?

Paul tells us when this will happen. In verse 10, he says "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

So, what did he mean by that which is "perfect"? There are several ideas about what Paul was talking about. We will discuss the two that are most prevalent today.

FIRST.....Some say he was referring to when Jesus comes in the Rapture.

SECOND.....Some say he was referring to the completion of Scripture.

I believe that which is "perfect" is talking about the completion of the New Testament Scripture. The reasons I believe this are as follows.

- If Paul is referring to when Jesus comes again, why didn't he just say so? He did in I Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- The word "knowledge" has to be referring to the gift of knowledge and not knowledge in general.

Those who believe that tongues are for today say "that which is perfect" can't be talking about the completion of Scripture because it says that knowledge will cease also. They say that since knowledge hasn't ceased the gift of tongues hasn't ceased either.

However, we must understand that this is speaking of the gift of knowledge and not just knowledge in general. The gift of knowledge had to do with the writing of the New Testament, therefore when the New Testament was completed, that gift was no longer needed.

We know this has to be speaking about the gift of knowledge because knowledge, in general, will never end, whether we are talking about when the Scripture is completed or when the Lord returns.

WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SPEAK IN TONGUES?

1. IT IS DEMONIC

Many claim to be speaking in tongues have been found to be cursing God in another language. It is interesting to realize that Mormons and many other false religions claim to speak in tongues.

2. IT IS SOMETHING IS LEARNED

Those who believe in tongues try to teach others how to speak it. One of their techniques is to get the person to say their vowels over and over. They say this looses the tongue for the Spirit to take over.

My experience with tongues.

3. IT IS COMPLETELY EMOTIONAL

There are good and godly people who want the Lord's will to be done in their lives. They have such a desire to experience all the Lord has for them that they are willing to believe just about anything.

SOME FINDINGS OF LINGUISTIC EXPERTS WHO HAVE EXAMINED TONGUES SPEAKERS

1. Repetition of the same word or phrase.

Many times the tongues speaker will use the same word or phrase over and over as they are supposedly speaking in tongues.

2. Excessive use of one of two vowels.

All languages, even the most primitive, have words that are lengthy and have several vowels.

3. Absence of any sentence structure.

Every language has sentence structure. To make sense, it has to.

4. A greater length of the interpretation as compared with the tongue.

The tongue speaker may speak for two minutes and the interpretation be 10 minutes. If the interpretation is really what the tongue speaker has said, you would expect the length of the interpretation to be approximately the same at the tongue utterance.

5. Inconsistency in the interpretation of the same clauses or phrases.

When speaking in any language there is one evident thing. Words will remain the same. In other words, "brown" will always be pronounced as "brown". It isn't pronounced "brown" in one place and "brave" in another.

In the modern tongue movement, the person claiming to be speaking in tongues may use a word twice in their utterance. However, when the interpretation is given, that word will be interpreted as two totally different words. To explain. The same word spoken by the tongues speaker might be translated as "love" at one point and "song" in the other. This is contrary to the rules of understanding language structure.

6. Predominately King James style speech used in interpretation.

I believe we should use only the King James Version when talking about what translation we should use. But, I don't believe if the Lord speaks to us today He will use a King James style of English. He would certainly speak to us in a modern style of English.

Even if tongues are for today, the vast majority are not being done as the Bible teaches. Most do not follow the guidelines given in Scripture.

Many in the tongues movement do not care what a person believes doctrinally, as long as they speak in tongues, they will accept them. That is why we are seeing Episcopalians, Lutherans, Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists, and everyone else joining together.

I want to ask again if speaking in tongues is so important if it is a sign that a person is filled with the Spirit, why did Jesus not speak in tongues?

If Jesus came into the average meeting today, they would ask him, "are you filled with the Spirit?" He would say, "yes". They would ask, "have you spoken in tongues?" His reply would be "no". They would say "well, you need more than what you have".

5. THE DISCOVERY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

HOW DO I DISCOVER MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

I believe personally if we will walk with the Lord and stay surrendered to Him, our gifts will naturally be used and in a way that pleases God. He is the one who gave us the gifts we have. If we stay yielded to Him, He will naturally use us in the areas in which He has gifted us.

However, there are some guidelines we can use to help us determine what gifts we have.

PRAY AND ASK GOD

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

It is God's intention for us to understand and know how He has gifted us. If we ask Him sincerely, He will tell us what we need to know.

BE AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITIES

Find out which gifts are available

NOTICE HOW THE LORD USES YOU

ASK SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST

Sometimes, others know us better than we know ourselves. Ask a godly friend what they notice about you.

TRY NEW AREAS OF SERVICE

I am not suggesting we spend our lives drifting from one thing to the other. I am saying that sometimes it helps to try different areas of service for a while to try to determine where the Lord wants us.

6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS Rom. 12:1-8

We have been gifted by the Holy Spirit in certain areas but that does not mean that we are not to develop the gifts that we have. The artist has certain inbred talents but to do the best he is capable of, he must hone his craft by hours at the canvas.

PRESENT YOURSELF v. 1

The starting place in developing our spiritual gifts is always, giving ourselves totally to God. If we are not willing to do that, we will never be what He desires.

KEEP SEPARATED FROM THE WORLD v. 2

If we allow the world to influence us, it will hinder the Spirit of God in our lives.

DON'T THINK MORE OF YOURSELF THAN YOU OUGHT v. 3a

It's important that we stay humble and realize that no matter how "gifted" we are, we are nothing without Christ and His work through us.

DON'T THINK LESS OF YOURSELF THAN YOU OUGHT v. 3b

Don't compare yourself with someone else. If you feel like you don't have what others have, don't worry about it.

God has gifted you in the exact way that He wants to use you. Just be the best "you" you can be.

DO WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO v. 4-5

We need you and you need us.

DO WHAT YOU DO WITH ALL OF YOUR HEART v. 6

Start where you are with what you have.

Serve where you are with what you have. Ask the Lord to help you to grow to be able to do more and better. But, don't feel like you have to wait until you have reached a particular stage of development before you serve.

FOLLOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD v. 7 "wait"

Don't get ahead or behind of God.

This tells us that the gifts we have aren't something we are to use as we see fit or as we please.

When Paul says "wait", he means we aren't to run ahead of God or to lag behind Him. We are to let Him lead us as we operate in the gifts we have.

When we misuse a gift, it can become a curse. For example, the person with the gift of exhortation can be a person who has the ability to encourage others. They can be a delight to be around. But, if that person tries to do the encouraging themselves, they can actually become obnoxious and irritating. Where people could be helped and encouraged by this person, they will dread to see them coming.

DO WHAT YOU DO GLADLY v. 8b "with cheerfulness"

Don't do what you do grudgingly. We should never have the "I guess I have to" attitude. It is a privilege to do something for God. We should be thrilled to do whatever we can for His glory.

The bottom line

BELIEVE.....Know that He has gifted you and wants to use you.

SURRENDER....Give yourself to Him for whatever He desires.

When a Christian yields to the Holy Spirit and their gift is in operation the end result will be, the Holy Spirit is seen.

OBEY.....Do whatever He says to do.

TRUST.....Leave the results to Him and don't try to make anything happen.

When we do this, He is able to work and then He gets the glory.