

SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.
MINISTRY SCHOOL 3RD EDITION
SESSION 72 – PRAYER PART 15
PRAYING WITH TONGUES

We continue our study on prayer. In this lesson, we will study praying with tongues. Let's look at **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**.

***“7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
10 to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another DIVERS KINDS OF TONGUES; to another the interpretation of tongues:
11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”***

In this lesson we will discuss praying with tongues. Believers receive the gift of tongues when they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The nine gifts of the Spirit, or nine manifestations by which the Holy Spirit demonstrates himself, are listed in **1 Corinthians 12:8-10**. Three of these gifts of the Spirit are utterance or inspirational gifts. These gifts, which are sometimes called vocal gifts, are designed to be an inspiration in public worship.

Of these vocal gifts, the gift of tongues is the most predominant. Speaking with other tongues is important to the believer because speaking in tongues is the gateway into the supernatural realm.

Often denomination people ask, “Why do Pentecostal’s emphasize tongues to such a great extent?” Well, the answer is, of course, “We don’t.” You see, the BIBLE discusses the importance of tongues, and the prominence tongues is supposed to have in the life of the believer.

The reason it seems we may overemphasize tongues is because often folks ask us about this gift of the Holy Spirit, and it compels us to discuss it. In discussing it, thank God, we can always give an answer according to the word of God.

Speaking in tongues is always manifested when believers are baptized in the Holy Ghost. In fact, speaking in tongues is the bible evidence for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:4]. After the believer is filled with the Spirit, he is to maintain a continual experience of speaking in tongues which enriches his life immeasurably.

Now, there is a private use of speaking in tongues that we find in 1 Corinthians 14:13, 14, as the believer communes with God. There is a public use of speaking in tongues in a public assembly or church [1 Cor. 14:27, 28]. There is a difference in purpose and use between simply speaking with tongues in one's private devotions, and in ministering in tongues in a public assembly or group.

Regardless, the essence of tongues is the same, and the source of the tongues is the same. The gift of tongues comes from the Holy Ghost. If people have been filled with the Holy Ghost in our midst, then we are going to have people speaking in tongues. Not only that, but the Spirit-baptized believer does not have to stop speaking with tongues after his initial baptism of the Holy Spirit. He can continue to speak with tongues, although he may not be used to publicly minister or speak forth a message in tongues in a church assembly. Tongues can and should continue to be used by the Spirit-filled believer in prayer and in his worship of God.

A well-known Pentecostal Bible teacher and founder of the oldest Pentecostal bible school in the world said, and we quote:

“We must not forget that the speaking with other tongues is not only the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, but speaking with other tongues is a continual experience for the rest of one's life to assist in the worship of God. Speaking with tongues is a flowing stream that should never die out, and that will enrich the life spiritually.” (quoted from Questions and Answers on Spiritual Gifts – Howard Carter, Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, Inc. 1976.)

Tongues: The Initial Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Notice first of all that speaking with tongues is always manifested when folks are filled with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:4

“4 and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

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One should not argue and fuss about whether or not tongues is the evidence of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. According to **Acts 2:4**, it is. On the other hand, we know that Christians who do not speak with tongues have experiences in the Holy Ghost, too, because, after all, the new birth is wrought by the Holy Ghost when one is born again. God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. (**Romans 8:16**.)

A young pastor read the New Testament and felt that if he received the same Holy Ghost that the Early Church did on the Day of Pentecost, then he wanted the same accompanying sign – tongues. He believed that if he didn't have the same accompanying sign – speaking with tongues – that he had no scriptural evidence that he was filled with the same Holy Spirit that they were filled with. He received the Holy Spirit and did speak with tongues just like they did in **Acts 2:4**.

A well-known preacher, Smith Wigglesworth argued that he was filled with the Holy Ghost when he got saved. Then he heard that Christians in a local Episcopal Church were speaking in tongues, and he went to see about it. He found that the pastor of that church and his wife both had received the baptism in the Holy Ghost along with many of his church members. It was happening all over Europe.

Wigglesworth was asked by that pastor if he had received the Holy Ghost. He answered, "Yes."

They then asked if he spoke with tongues when he was filled, and he said, "No, but I am just as much filled with the Holy Ghost as you are." Wigglesworth was adamant about it and he almost disrupted their meetings.

Later, Wigglesworth finally went to the pastor's place of residence and asked him to pray for him to receive the Holy Ghost, but the pastor wasn't there. The pastor's wife said, "I'll pray for you."

Wigglesworth replied, "Just pray for me that I will get the tongues."

She said, "No, you do not want the tongues, you want the Holy Ghost. The tongues will take care of itself."

Wigglesworth said, "I have the Holy Ghost."

She said, "Never mind. Kneel down here." She was tired of arguing with him! So, he knelt down, and she laid hands on his head. He said that when she laid hands on him, the Holy Ghost Power came upon him.

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Just then there was an interruption, so she left the room and pulled the door closed so Wigglesworth would not be disturbed. As the power of God came upon him, God gave him a vision. Wigglesworth said,

“In this vision I saw a stream of blood flowing from Calvary like a mighty river. I saw myself in that stream. I began to cry out, ‘Clean, clean, clean. I’m clean; the blood has cleansed me. I’m clean because of the blood of Jesus.’ In a few moments I noticed that I wasn’t saying, ‘Clean’ in English. I was talking in some kind of language I had never spoken before. I was speaking in tongues.”

Then, he had another vision. Wigglesworth related,

“In it I saw the mighty power of Pentecost and of God, the Holy Ghost settled all my arguments for me. I had been arguing with Spirit-filled believers every day that I had the Holy Ghost just as much as they did. In a moment’s time I saw that I had never really been filled with the Holy Ghost until then. Certainly, I had had some wonderful experiences before as a minister. God had blessed me and had anointed me to preach. My wife and I had gotten many saved and even healed, but I had never really been filled with the Holy Ghost until then. When you get an experience inside the Word of God, you have an experience outside the realm of argument. Before, I had an argument, but now I had an experience with God.”

Well, a bible-based experience is always better than an argument! The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit according to the Word, is speaking with other tongues.

We also need to realize that the gift of tongues with interpretation is distinctive of this dispensation, the New Testament era, the Age of Grace. All the other gifts of the Spirit were manifested in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Even in the life and ministry of Jesus, all the other gifts of the Spirit were manifested except tongues and interpretation.

Because tongues and interpretation of tongues are distinctive of this Church Age dispensation, that is one reason they are more frequently given by the Holy Spirit and used in the Church than the other gifts of the Spirit. That is another reason it seems we have an abundance of this particular manifestation.

Divers Kinds of Tongues

Divers kinds of tongues are supernatural utterances given by the Holy Ghost, which are languages never learned or understood by the speaker. However, divers kinds of tongues

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are not always unknown to the hearers. We say this because sometimes folks are present who understand a language one might receive when he is initially filled with the Holy Ghost or even when he ministers in tongues in a public assembly or group.

A minister told of a trip he took to Mexico. He and his wife spent several days there, and this minister had the opportunity to preach in one of the mission stations in Mexico. He had taken a load of provisions from his church to the needy folks in Mexico.

He preached about five nights, and the missionary at the mission interpreted his sermon to the people in Spanish. One night he saw a beautiful sight. There was a large, homely woman who came to receive the Holy Ghost. The Power of God fell on her and she began to speak in the most perfect English that he had ever heard in his life. He understood everything she said.

The woman had never gone to school. She did not speak English. She only spoke Latin-American Spanish. In other words, Spanish was her native language. In the natural she could not speak a word of English. When she received the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, she was given an utterance in a known tongue – known to some, but unknown to her. That did something spiritually to that minister, and he was never the same after that.

The reason it is called divers kinds of tongues is different or diverse kinds of tongues, occasionally someone present may know the tongue which is spoken by another. However, this will not always be the case. Sometimes the diverse tongue is absolutely unknown to man. Sometimes the believer will speak in a heavenly language, because in **1 Corinthians 14:2** it says, “**...NO MAN UNDERSTANDETH HIM, howbeit in the spirit he speaketh MYSTERIES.**” We thank God that He understands.

Often one will be enabled by the Holy Spirit in ministering tongues in public, and sometimes even in praying in other tongues, to speak in a known tongue – **that is, known to man, but unknown to the one speaking.**

An example happened in a prayer meeting with two Spirit-filled denominational pastors present. The group had been praying in tongues for a long time. As they were praying, one of the men noticed that one of the pastors looked at another man several times. That man continued to pray in tongues. Afterwards, he asked why he had been stared at.

The other pastor said, “Did you know what language you were speaking?”

He responded with, “No, I was just praying in tongues.”

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The other pastor said, “You were speaking Spanish.”

The man that had been praying in tongues said, “If I was, I didn’t know it. I was just praying.”

The pastor said, “I speak Spanish and I understood what you said. Actually, not only did you pray, but you quit praying and were talking to me in Spanish. I understood what you said.”

The Holy Spirit was talking to this pastor in a language he could understand. The tongue was unknown to the man that was praying, but not unknown to the pastor that was hearing it. The man did not know he had been inspired by the Holy Ghost to speak forth that message. It was inspired utterance in a known tongue, but it was unknown to the man speaking.

Just after that message came forth in tongues, the power of God hit the pastor that heard the man speaking in tongues and he fell to the floor face down. The Holy Spirit gave him a vision. He lay there for about forty minutes. This denominational pastor had been given the funds to attend this convention by a deacon in his church. He had come to the convention convinced of the truth of God’s Word and the reality of God’s Spirit!

Sometimes tongues are unknown to man; that is, only God understands the tongues. But sometimes tongues are known by man. Another example of this is an incident that occurred once with a woman who was a missionary to India. She was home on furlough and did not know whether or not she should go back to India. She was attending a Bible institute and one of the students got up in the assembly and began to speak in tongues.

There was no interpretation given for the tongues. As they waited and wondered about it, this missionary arose and said, “That student was speaking one of the dialects which is spoken in India. I understood every word that was said. That message was for me and that is the reason there was no interpretation. In that message, God spoke to me and said He wanted me to go back to India, and He was telling me what to do.”

This woman understood the language and she knew that the Bible school student had no knowledge of that language. It was spoken just for her. Thank God for the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Importance of Speaking in Tongues

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Some people say, “What is the use of speaking with tongues?” There are some folks who have been filled with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with tongues. But then they see no reason to continue speaking with tongues after their initial experience. We might question such a person’s intelligence. It seems to us that anyone who is capable of reading could read the Word of God for himself and readily see what the Word says on the subject of tongues found in **Jude 20; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 5, 18**. Too many times we can read the Word of God with glasses that are colored with tradition. In other words, many times we do not get the full importance of what God’s Word says **because we believe we already know what it says!**

Notice in **1 Corinthians 14** that Paul devotes almost an entire chapter on the subject of speaking with tongues. He talks a little about prophecy and a little about interpretation, but for the most part, the chapter is primarily about tongues. There are not too many subjects in the Bible on which an entire chapter has been entirely devoted to that subject alone. For example, prayer is a subject of utmost importance, but nowhere in the bible do you find an entire chapter on prayer.

Paying tithes and giving offerings are very important, too, aren’t they? You could not carry on the work of God without them. Yet there is not an entire chapter in the bible devoted to the subject of giving tithes and offerings.

Water baptism is also a very important bible subject, but there is not a whole chapter on that subject either.

The new birth – the born-again experience is an all-important subject. But nowhere in the bible is an entire chapter devoted to that subject.

The point is there are many bible subjects that are very important. Just because there is not a whole chapter on them does not mean that they are not important. On the other hand, we must also realize that when we see an entire chapter on a subject, it must carry some significance because God did not put unnecessary words in the bible. He does not fill up His Word with unnecessary statements. Therefore, this teaching on tongues must be important because God devoted an entire chapter to it in His word.

Notice in **1 Corinthians 14:2**, **“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God...”** Paul is not talking here about ministering tongues in a public assembly. He is talking about the individual Spirit-filled believer speaking in tongues in his own private prayer life.

It is also proper to pray in tongues at the altar because you go there to talk to God and to seek Him. When tongues are ministered in a public assembly or group, it is God speaking to us.

Speaking with Tongues is Not Always Prayer

Even in Pentecostal circles there are all kinds of ideas and teachings about tongues that do not line up with the Word. For example, a pastor was speaking to a large crowd of about nine hundred people. He said something that was not scriptural. The man listening thought, "I am so sorry he said that because it isn't true."

This pastor had misled the whole crowd because he said that all speaking with tongues are prayer. But ALL SPEAKING WITH TONGUES IS NOT PRAYER. He took that verse in **1 Corinthians 14** where Paul said, **"...he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaking not unto men, but unto God..."**, and applied that verse to ALL SPEAKING IN TONGUES. It is true that when we pray in tongues in our private prayer lives, we are praying directly to God. But this pastor failed to take into account the other uses of tongues which are NOT PRAYER.

For example, diverse tongues is a means whereby the Holy Ghost can speak through the believer in a KNOWN tongue. The tongue may be unknown to the speaker but known to someone else. By saying that all tongues are prayer, this pastor was also discounting the gift of interpretation of tongues whereby God speaks unto MAN. That is not prayer. It is God speaking to man. Therefore, this pastor's statement that all tongues is prayer does not line up with what the Word says.

Tongues are manifested in other ways besides just prayer. As we said previously, tongues may be a manifestation of a KNOWN tongue, as when the man spoke in Spanish that he had never learned under the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

A preacher was preaching at a camp meeting in Oklahoma. As the people were leaving it began to rain. The preacher and his wife gave a woman a ride home. She told the preacher that she belonged to another church and wanted to ask the preacher a question. She said that her son was in the Army and after the war he stayed in Germany for a while. He had picked up his mother earlier in the week and heard the preacher speaking in tongues.

Her son asked her, "Who was that fellow talking in German?"

His mother said, "Do you mean the preacher?" She then asked her son if the preacher was speaking in German?"

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Her son said, “Yes.”

She then said to the preacher, “Then my son said, ‘another fellow got up and translated the message for him.’

Her son told her that he could speak quite a bit of German himself, so he understood the message given in tongues by the preacher.

She said she asked her son, “Did the fellow who translated for the preacher do all right?”

Her son said, “He did fine. He did not translate it exactly – word for word – but he gave the meaning of what was said.”

She told her son that the preacher didn’t know German (which was true) and that the preacher was speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, along with the man that interpreted what the preacher said. She told him that this kind of thing was in the bible.

She said her son said, “Are you sure?”

She told her son, “Yes, I don’t know much about it, but I have been learning since I have been coming to these camp meetings.”

Her son then said, “I believe I will keep on going to these services.”

The woman concluded, “My son isn’t a Christian, but that made a great impression on him.

The same preacher held a meeting later at a church in Arizona where a young Jewish boy attended. He had joined the Air Force and didn’t have a lot of friends. A young Pentecostal boy had befriended him and invited him to the church. He wouldn’t go because he didn’t believe in Jesus – that he was the Messiah. But then, the Jewish boy said, “Well, I shouldn’t be that way. After all, you are the only one here that has befriended me, so I will go with you.”

He came to that Pentecostal Church. A woman there got up and spoke in tongues. The pastor who was usually used in interpretation said that he did not get any interpretation. He waited, and no one else got the interpretation. This same woman was also used in the gift of interpretation of tongues yet never interpreted the message.

The pastor said, “After I waited for a few minutes, we just went on with the service. After the service was over, he was shaking hands with the folks at the front door, when the Jewish boy came up to him and said,

“Who was that woman who talked to me?”

The pastor said, “What do you mean?”

The boy said, “That woman who got up in the service talked to me. She talked in my language. She even called my name. She told me what I had been thinking. She told me that Christ was the Messiah and that I should believe on Him.”

The pastor told the young Jewish boy, “That dear woman is a widow. She only has about a fifth-grade education. She takes in washings for a living. She does not speak any foreign languages.”

The pastor called the woman over and introduced her to the Jewish boy so he could tell by talking to her that she was a very uneducated woman.

The Jewish boy said, “I will have to think about this.” He came back the next Sunday night and was born again.

This young Jewish boy received Christ as the Messiah and his Savior as a result of that woman standing up and giving a message in tongues. She wasn’t praying; she was delivering a message in a KNOWN tongue. All talking in tongues is not prayer, regardless of what some people may tell you.

It is true that one phase of speaking with tongues is prayer. Tongues can be used in prayer. In fact, no one will ever have a completely successful prayer life without praying in tongues. You may have been mighty in God without praying in tongues, but you will be more powerful in God by praying in tongues:

1 Corinthians 14:2

“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.”

Moffatt’s translation of **1 Corinthians 14:2** says when a person is speaking in tongues, ***“...he is talking of divine secrets in the Spirit.”*** God has devised a means whereby we may

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speak supernaturally to Him. By speaking in tongues, man can talk divine secrets with God.

Tongues: A Means of Edifying Yourself Spiritually

Speaking with tongues is also a way we can magnify God. In Acts 10:46 concerning Cornelius and his household, it says, ***“For they heard them speak with tongues, and MAGNIFY GOD...”***

One minister spent a lot of wonderful times with the Lord as he prayed in a barn. This was before he received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Often after praying he went away disappointed. He would tell God how much he loved Him and use all the descriptive adjectives he had at his disposal to tell God how wonderful He was. He would exhaust his vocabulary and leave that place of prayer feeling disappointed in his spirit for not being able to say what he wanted to. His spirit felt like he had cheated it.

He would compare this feeling with going to a restaurant to get something to eat, but when he paid for the meal his stomach would say, “You cheated me!”

He didn’t know what was missing in his prayer time. He knew that he was a child of God, and he knew that he had been healed by the power of God. He knew he had been raised up from a deathbed. He knew God had called him to preach. He would preach and people would get saved and some got healed. But he would go away from that place of prayer with something on the inside of him saying, “You cheated me!” His spirit wanted to pray, too, apart from his understanding – his mind.

1 Corinthians 14:14

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, MY SPIRIT PRAYETH, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

After he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues, he worshipped and magnified God, praying and singing in tongues. He never again left a place of prayer, feeling that he did not say what he wanted to because his spirit had been divinely enabled to say what it wanted to say by the Holy Spirit who indwelt him.

We don’t need to argue or fuss over praying in tongues. But to put it simple, folks who don’t see the truth of the bible about praying in tongues are missing a blessing. If we know

something is good, we want to share it with others! It is like a favorite food that is just so good that you want everyone you care about to try it too!

God wants to do so much more for us. He wants to communicate with us in a more effective way than just by our native language. He wants to communicate with us supernaturally through the precious Holy Spirit.

Tongues: A Means of Praying Supernaturally

We want every Christian to know the joy of fellowshiping with the Lord in the Spirit. As we discussed earlier, the Holy Spirit IN YOU can HELP YOU with your praying. The amplified version of **1 Corinthians 14:14** says:

“...my spirit [by the Holy Spirit with me] prays...”

We cannot overestimate what this kind of praying can mean in our life personally. There is no way in the world to estimate its value. We cannot ever overestimate the value of praying in tongues.

One preacher did a lot of travelling and was away from home quite a bit. Again and again, if anything was happening at home that he needed to be aware of, the Holy Spirit would immediately alert him in his spirit. He would wake up in the night and something on the inside of him would say, “Something is not right. One of the family members is in trouble. Something is wrong.”

Immediately he would say to the Holy Ghost [he did not pray TO the Holy Ghost, but He is a Person, a Divine member of the Godhead, and He lives inside us, and we can talk with Him.] He would say to the Holy Ghost, “I do not know what is wrong, but you know everything. You are in me as my Helper. Help me pray about this condition or situation the way it should be prayed about.”

Then he would begin praying in tongues, sometimes for hours. Many times, He would let him know what he was praying about and give him the answer to his prayer in his spirit. Whether he showed him or not, within a few days the preacher would see the situation work out fine. We can EACH do work for God praying supernaturally in tongues.

Sometimes he would pray for his children in tongues. Sometimes he would have a revelation from God for the answer. The Holy Spirit will show us just exactly what to do. You can be sure that God knows what is going on whether or not he reveals it to you. Praying in tongues gets the job done when nothing else will.

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A young minister and his wife were living with his father who was also a pastor. He had preached a service in another area and on the way back to his home a fellow in another car was weaving all over the highway and hit the minister's car head on.

His father received a call about the accident and was told his son had a broken neck and back and that he was paralyzed from his waist down and was unconscious. The doctor was surprised that he wasn't dead. They put him in a full-body cast and he lay in the bed unconscious.

His father went to the hospital and prayed for him. The young minister woke up and then drifted back unconscious. His father continued to pray in tongues and the young minister woke up again. His father asked him if he could hear him then blink his eyes. The young minister blinked his eyes and went back unconscious.

The father continued to pray in tongues for over ten hours. Early in the morning the father went over to his son and saw that his son was lying there with his eyes open. He asked his son if he could hear him, and he said he could. The young man told his father that he was all right and that God had healed him. He began to wiggle his fingers and toes; he had regained feeling all over his body.

The nurse and doctor came in and they both said it was a miracle. The young minister told them that God had healed him and that he wanted the doctor to take the cast off. He said when he did that, they would find that his back and neck were healed and that he was all right.

After much persuasion, the doctor took the young minister and x-rayed his spine. The doctor came back and said he just couldn't believe it. It was as if his back and neck had never been broken. They kept the young minister in the hospital for a day or two and kept checking him. Finally, they took off the cast, but they told him to wear a neck brace for a little while, but he went home and took it off. He was healed.

Years later this man was still all right. He was still preaching the gospel for years. The church had prayed for the young minister, but the father got the job done when he began to pray in the spirit. He got the help of the Holy Ghost. You increase your power in prayer by one hundred percent by praying in other tongues!

Praying in Tongues is Unselfish Prayer

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There are missionaries in other countries that we need to back up in prayer. Our praying does not need to be self-centered. Sometimes the extent of our praying is for our own families. Some churches pray ONLY for their local church; those prayers are selfish. We should be interested in everyone EVERYWHERE. We need a worldwide vision. Yes, we should be interested in our local church and certainly should be praying for our own families, but we should not pray just for them and neglect others.

Never have the attitude of “What am I going to get out of it?” That is selfish and shows a lack of praying in the Spirit and walking in the light of God’s Word. If we pray that way whether we are a preacher or a layperson, we are wrong.

We cannot spend time praying in tongues and fellowshiping with God without the very love and nature of God permeating our being. And the more we pray in tongues, the less selfish we will become in our praying, and it will show up in our relationships with our fellow man.

As we said, speaking in tongues is the gateway into the supernatural in our Christian walk. There are wonderful blessings in store for believers who receive the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Once you have had that initial experience, you then continue to keep tongues as a “flowing stream” in your life. To reach the potential we have in Christ for supernatural praying and supernatural living, we cannot neglect this precious gift of speaking with tongues.

In closing let us look at **Jude 20-21**:

Jude 20-21

“20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost

21 KEEP YOURSELVES in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”