



THE
POWER
of PRAYING in
TONGUES

EDWARD A. SMITH



Introduction

God desires to have a close relationship with His children, and a fundamental way of building a strong relationship with God is by maintaining a powerful prayer life. A strong prayer life is so vital to strengthening your relationship with God because it allows you to directly communicate with Him. After all, without frequent communication, how can any relationship truly flourish?

Because prayer is such a fundamental part of fellowshiping with God, He has enabled Christians to pray to Him in a profound way. That way is through *praying in tongues*. There is a clear biblical benefit to praying in tongues, and I have written this book to help Christians better understand its tremendous rewards and enormous power.

This book will address the following questions often asked about praying in tongues:

- What does it mean to pray in tongues?
- Did tongues cease at the end of the apostolic age or when the last apostle died?
- What are the benefits or reasons for praying in tongues? Why should I pray in tongues?
- Who should pray in tongues? Is this reserved just for preachers and pastors?
- Can I pray in tongues at will or only when the Spirit moves me?



Foreword

Dr. Tunde Bakare
President – Global Apostolic Impact Network
Pastor – The Latter Rain Assembly, Lagos, Nigeria

Much has been said and written about praying in tongues. The views, however, vary based on the ideological leanings of the presenters. Tongues, when inspired of God, is a gift, an ability divinely given to enable a believer to live a life in the supernatural as opposed to struggling. It gives uninhibited access to the arsenals, the resources of heaven and subsequently, releases the power for the attainment of all that pertains to life and godliness.

Pastor Edward A. Smith's book is crisp, direct in approach and makes for interesting reading. It is captivating. There is a blending with real life experiences to illustrate this awesome provision that even the most skeptical critic will find invaluable. It is down to earth and simplified, yet, very deep. The choice of very simple expressions to weave basic Biblical principles attests to the ingenuity of the author and his good grasp of the subject.

This book is a must read for all who crave to dominate their circumstances and environment with the incontestable wisdom of heaven. It is good material for all who yearn to win by righteousness and be effective vessels for the extending of the frontiers of His kingdom in this part of the divide. It is for those who have destiny in view.

The Power of Praying in Tongues

By Pastor Edward Smith

Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1.....Why You Need to Pray in Tongues

Chapter 2.....Did Tongues Cease at the End of the Apostolic Age?

Chapter 3.....The Purpose of Praying in Tongues

Chapter 4.....The Benefits of Praying in Tongues

Chapter 5.....Praying in Tongues Strengthens the Inner Man

Chapter 6.....Releasing the Power of God by Praying in Tongues

Chapter 7.....Praying in Tongues Helps Us Walk in Purpose

Chapter 8.....Praying in Tongues Helps Us Enter God's Rest

Chapter 9.....Praying in Tongues Guides Our Decision Making

Chapter 10.....How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Conclusion

Introduction

God desires to have a close relationship with his children, and a fundamental way of building a strong relationship with God is by maintaining a powerful prayer life. A strong prayer life is so vital to strengthening your relationship with God because it allows you to directly communicate with him. After all, without frequent communication, how can any relationship truly flourish?

Because prayer is such a fundamental part of fellowshiping with God, he has enabled Christians to pray to him in a profound way. That way is through *praying in tongues*. There is a clear biblical benefit to praying in tongues, and I have written this book to help Christians better understand its tremendous rewards and enormous powers.

This book will address the following questions often asked about praying in tongues:

- What does it mean to pray in tongues?
- Did tongues cease at the end of the apostolic age or when the last apostle died?
- What are the benefits or reasons for praying in tongues? Why should I pray in tongues?
- Who should pray in tongues? Is this reserved just for preachers and pastors?
- What are the different types of tongues the Bible teaches about?
- Can I pray in tongues at will or only when the Spirit moves me?
- How do I receive the Holy Spirit with the ability to pray in tongues?

Praying in tongues is a controversial subject in many religious circles, where the value and benefits of its practice has been questioned. There are those who say about praying in tongues, “That’s not for me – it’s not my style.” However, in exploring what the Bible says about praying in tongues, you will begin to understand the awesome power that accompanies it. I hope this book will be a blessing to you by helping you gain a greater understanding of the immeasurable benefits of praying in tongues. As a result of your praying in tongues, you will release the full power of God to move on your behalf so you can live a victorious Christian life!

Chapter 1: Why You Need to Pray In Tongues

I Corinthians 14:18 says: *“I thank my God that I speak in tongues more than the rest of you all.”* The book of Corinthians was written to the church of Corinth by the great apostle Paul, who told the church that he thanked God that he spoke in tongues “more than the rest of you all.” Paul not only tells us here that he prayed in tongues, but also he prayed in tongues *quite a bit*.

When I was a young boy, there was a song I used to sing that went something like this: “Every time I feel the spirit moving in my heart, I will pray.” Nice song, but here’s the problem with those lyrics: If you only prayed every time you felt something, you wouldn’t pray very much. You need to pray because you decide to. The bible says, “I will pray in the Spirit. I will pray in the understanding also.” It is *your* decision whether you pray one time in your life or every day. The reason I believe some Christians (particularly those who are filled with the Holy Spirit) don’t pray in tongues on a regular basis is because they don’t understand what they are missing out on. They don’t understand the benefits of it.

As we read in I Corinthians 14:18, Paul thanked God that he spoke in tongues “more than you all.” Now think about what he said: *“I thank God.”* He had some insight into praying in tongues that the average person didn’t. In others words, he was saying, “I want it! I want to do it! I thank God that I do!” Later in this book, I will further address what caused Paul to say, “I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all.”

God Blesses Ministries Who Pray in Tongues

It is interesting what is going on with churches around the world. The fastest growing churches in the world are those that purport to praying in tongues, *and do*. I recently read a Los Angeles Times article about the churches in America, and the reporter was happy because some of the mainline denominations had 1% growth in their membership attendance. They were excited because attendance in American churches was declining. I don’t know *who* they surveyed. They didn’t talk to members of my church! They didn’t talk to a lot of other churches throughout the country and around the world that are growing in leaps and bounds. Many churches are growing much more than 1% a year – more like 50% or 100% a year. And those churches are alive because the Holy Spirit is alive there.

Think about some of the larger ministries you see on television. Whether its CBN or TBN, these are ministries that pray in tongues. The majority of the ministries that are doing the most work and having the most impact in the kingdom are the ones that are saying, “Look, we’re going to pray in tongues to tap into the power of God.” These growing ministries *are not* the ones that are saying, “Praying in tongues went out with the early church. We don’t believe in miracles anymore. They died on the vine.”

Some ministries have discouraged praying or speaking in tongues because they are afraid of scaring people away. But I like what a certain minister said about flowing with the Holy Spirit: "I would rather tolerate a little wildfire than have no fire at all." Preachers who say they'll have no tongue speaking in their churches are those who have no fire left. It is as though you are a bank owner who doesn't hire bank tellers because you're afraid of anyone stealing from your bank. Jesus had a thief in his group, but it did not stop him! My friend, if we based our decisions on a potential negative outcome, we would be quite limited in our experiences and perceptions. Let us take a look at what God is saying you should do.

Let us begin to understand the benefits of praying in other tongues. I thank God for what he is doing in my church. So many people in our congregation have caught onto the word of God and have begun to pray. Let me share with you a few footnotes by giving you a backdrop of our ministry and describing what we are teaching at our church. More than 3,500 people have been filled with the Holy Spirit since our church opened its doors nearly 12 years ago. That means that God is sending people our way. In many cases, if nothing else, God has sent people to our church to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I remember a lady who came to our service after driving down a street near our church. She had an impression to turn into our church's driveway, so she parked in our lot. She then walked inside the church, sat in the back of the auditorium and heard the end of the sermon. She responded to an invitation to receive the Holy Spirit, began speaking in tongues and went back to her Baptist church! She came to our church for *a reason*: God wanted her to get fired up with the Holy Ghost!

A lot of churches do not take time at every service to give people an opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit. They assume that you already have it and they won't bother to ask if anyone needs to receive it. We invite people to receive the Holy Spirit at every service, even at bible studies, and people respond. The numbers speak for themselves. Nearly 6,200 people received Christ since we started our church. More than 225 people in my ministry pray in tongues at least an hour every week in groups at different locations. This number does not include those who pray in tongues on their own. More than 200 people attend our all-night prayer meetings that are held every three months. No one is dragging anyone to come these prayer meetings. They come on their own because they see results!

The Value of Speaking in Tongues

I Corinthians 14:37 says: *If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.* God is commanding you to do something right here. The scripture goes on to say: *"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.* There are some who consider tongues very controversial and refuse to receive what God is saying. What God is saying here is that if they choose to be ignorant, let them be ignorant. In other words, they don't want to learn and grow. I Corinthians 14:39 says: *Wherefore brethren covet or desire earnestly to prophesy and forbid not.* God is saying to not forbid or discourage speaking in tongues. Why would God say don't forbid it if there was no purpose for it? The fact that God clarified not to forbid speaking in tongues implies that there is value in allowing it.

My life has changed dramatically since I've been filled with the Holy Spirit and praying in tongues on a daily basis. Also, everyone I know who prays in tongues prospers in their ministries and lives. However, I recently learned through another pastor that his friend some time ago began to talk against praying in tongues. He actually used to pray in tongues, but eventually backed away from it. He suggested that praying in tongues is not of God and discouraged his congregation from doing it. That same man is going through hell in his ministry today.

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit

It is very important to understand that language is required for people to have quality fellowship. The more language interchange you have with someone, the more abundant fellowship you can enjoy with that person. But if you have no language communication, you have no fellowship. You may know one another, but fellowship requires language. If you just shook hands and walked by someone, but never talked, you would have met someone rather than having had a good fellowship with that person. Fellowship is reflective of people talking and communicating with one another.

The Greek word *koinonia* means partnership. The word partnership means having the same in common with or having a fellowship. We are commanded to have communion with God and have fellowship with him. God commands us to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. But fellowship requires language.

Breaking the Language Barrier

In Genesis 11, the scriptures say that men on the earth spoke in one language, and they began to do great things. They began to build this great tower – called the Tower of Babel – to go up to heaven to reach God. God did not like what they were trying to do, so he came down and destroyed the tower and confounded their language and scattered them. They could no longer communicate with one another or have fellowship because they did not speak the same language. Today, we have so many different languages – English, French, German, Swahili and Spanish, to name a few. But praise God that he has broken the language barrier! On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), God poured out the Holy Spirit, and he gave man the opportunity to communicate with him through a heavenly language that surpasses our mental limitations.

How many times have you gone to a store to purchase a card to say thank you to someone, express your love or help celebrate an anniversary or birthday? You may have searched throughout all the cards and couldn't find a card to express the words that reflect what's in your heart. Then you settled for a card that was blank inside and put your own message in it, but it still wasn't quite what you wanted to say. The reason that happens is because our natural language is limited. We cannot always express what is really inside of us to express. Even when we talk to God and pray to him, our natural language is limited. God has given us another language that goes beyond our human mental and physical limitations so that our communication with God is in line with his perfect will.

A man once told me that he didn't understand how I could pray two to three hours each day. He said that he would finish praying after five minutes because he couldn't figure out what to pray about after 10 minutes. He wanted to know how I could pray so long. If I prayed in English – in my natural language – for my wife and children, the car, house and ministry, I would finish in 10 or 15 minutes, too! There are limitations to what we think we should pray about. But there are things (we'll find later) that God says you need to pray about. You may not know what to pray about, but the Holy Spirit – who is God – knows all. If you release the Holy Spirit inside of you, he'll pray for you on your behalf. He'll say things to God that you would have prayed about if you would had known to pray about them.

We often depend on our natural abilities and mental understandings to choose what to pray about. You may pray about a job and ask for a raise. That's fine. But when you allow the Holy Spirit to pray *through* you, he may pray that you get another job because instead of getting a 5% raise, you could get a 30% raise with a new job!

To pray for things beyond your understanding, you must allow the Holy Spirit to pray through you because the bible says that your mind is unfruitful and doesn't understand. If I held a conversation with Brother John and gave him my undivided attention, I could not talk to him and let my mind wander around at the same time. I could not give him my undivided attention if I were thinking about what I'd do with my wife the next day. When you speak in your natural language, you cannot do two things at once. But when you pray in the Holy Ghost – when you pray in tongues – you can talk to God out of your spirit because your mind is not involved in it. Your spirit is talking and your mind is open to receiving the instruction from the Lord because you don't know what you're saying and you're trusting the Holy Spirit to pray effectively through you. Praying in tongues is not a mental thing, it's a spiritual thing. If your mind was involved, you couldn't do it. But the bible says that when you pray in tongues, your *spirit* prayeth. God wants you to allow your spirit to do the praying.

Supernatural Results

God desires to do supernatural things in our lives, but it requires a supernatural manifestation that only comes through the Holy Spirit. So, if you don't pray in tongues on a regular basis, you'll miss out. I'm not suggesting that those who pray in tongues are better than someone who doesn't. But consider a woman who has \$10,000 in the bank and takes home a \$4,000 monthly income that meets the needs of her and her family. This woman is not a better person than someone who has no income or money in the bank. But even though someone praying in tongues is not better than someone who doesn't, the one who does pray in tongues can get along better in life by tapping into the power of God.

God wants your life to be totally revolutionized for the better. He doesn't want you to be mediocre or struggling in your Christianity. Don't take the alley route – take the boulevard route! You may get to the same place, but why not get there through the boulevard route? The boulevard route is with the Holy Spirit! It's a better way of living!

God's Truth Revealed

I Corinthians 14:2 says, "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." First of all, when you speak or pray in tongues, you speak unto God. You're not talking to man or even yourself. Just accept that. When you pray in tongues, you're talking to God.

This scripture also says that "no man understandeth it, what you say." In the natural sense, a mystery implies knowledge withheld. But in the scriptural sense, it means *truth revealed*. God wants to reveal truth of his will for your life when you take time to pray in other tongues. Later in this book, I'll share with you (along with ample supportive scriptures) about how praying in tongues will help you better understand the bible.

Praying in tongues on a regular basis will make a dramatic difference in your prayer life. If you don't pray in tongues, you will approach the bible as literature – you'll receive no insight from the Holy Ghost, *who is our teacher*. You need to understand that there is value and benefit to praying in tongues on a regular basis. Think about what Paul said: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all." He was not bragging. He was making a statement that he *sees value* in it.

Consider I Corinthians 2:6, 7: *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.*

Chapter 2: Did Tongues Cease at the End of the Apostolic Age?

Speaking in tongues *did not* cease after the apostolic age. God is still offering his Holy Spirit to as many as he is calling. In Mark 16:17, Jesus says, “*And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.*” Jesus is telling us here that all believers should have the sign of speaking in tongues following them. So, we’ve identified in scripture that speaking in tongues has not gone away. Although some churches will say that it has gone away, some will say it’s of the devil and it’s not of God while others will say that we don’t need to do that. But we must always look at what the bible says about it.

God Blesses Churches That Pray in Tongues

You should examine the evidence around you and see what God is doing in churches that claim to trust in the Holy Spirit. That’s where you will see people getting saved, healed and delivered, and their churches are growing faster than those that don’t believe in the Holy Spirit and His operation. Typically, churches that don’t believe in speaking in tongues are not growing at all. You don’t see much of the supernatural or miracles at these churches.

One of the churches we planted in Moreno Valley held their first Easter service in their region. The church’s pastor was very excited about the service’s response to the invitation to receive Christ that Sunday. Many men came forward and received salvation. There were some men who were considered “hard core” cases. When those men got saved, *that was a miracle*. One man was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. He came to their Easter service, got saved and joined the church! A woman from this church also received a miracle in her life. Her husband never attended church with her, although he was supportive of her involvement. I’m sure she believed God for her husband to be a good Christian man and to serve God. That same Easter Sunday, he got saved and joined the church! This is what God is doing!

These miracles happened because the Holy Spirit was released. People at this church were praying in tongues. In fact, I learned that a group of the church’s leaders had joined together with their wives to pray specifically for these men for many weeks. They prayed in tongues as well as in English. There’s a benefit to tapping into what God is doing.

Gaining Insight Into the Holy Spirit

I can understand that you may read this and ask yourself, “How can I be alive all these years and not be tapped into what God is doing? Do you really have some insight that I was not previously exposed to?” Although you may be a Christian and attend church, you may have been in the dark in some areas of your Christianity. It’s important that you get insight into the Holy Spirit based on the word of God – *not* based my opinion or any one else’s opinion.

Through this book, I want to help those of you who already pray in tongues but don't pray in tongues on a regular basis. I suppose you're waiting for the feeling to hit you. But you don't understand that if you don't do it on a regular basis, there is no benefit. What's important to know is that anything God gives you is meant to benefit you. Speaking in tongues is a very controversial subject in the church world. Some resist the Holy Spirit and all that he is doing. But God has shed some light on this subject. *It doesn't have to be controversial if you obey God.*

Chapter 3: The Purpose of Praying in Tongues

The primary purpose of praying in tongues is that it allows you to fellowship with God by way of the Holy Spirit.

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

II Corinthians 13:11-14

Fellowshipping With God

The word *communion* in the Greek is an interesting word. It is the word *koinonia*. It means having in common, partnership and fellowship. What Paul is saying – not only to the church at Corinth, but to all that would read the bible and believe it – is that we are to have communion with God by way of the Holy Spirit. God wants to fellowship with us. We are able to fellowship with him because God is a person – he is not an “it.” God has a personality and he can be communicated with.

The more communication you have with someone, the more fellowship you develop with that person. If you came to my house and we sat down together, but two hours went by and we never spoke with one another, you would say that we didn’t fellowship. We may have been in the house together in the same room, but we had no fellowship. But if we had talked, laughed and enjoyed one another, we would have fellowshiped. Verbal communication allows you to fellowship with one another. Likewise, God desires us to fellowship with him. But in order for you to have the ultimate level of fellowship or communication with God, you must begin to communicate in the language of the Holy Spirit, which is praying and speaking in other tongues.

Praying in Tongues is a Gift for All Christians

Praying in tongues is not just a “Pentecostal thing.” You may be surprised to know that many Catholics pray in tongues, whether they realize it or not. Many Baptists, Methodist and Lutherans also pray in tongues. So, praying in tongues is not based on a denominational association; it is a matter of one believing and practicing God’s word.

Americans have often had problems about the subject of praying in tongues. Most Christians in other parts of the world pray in other tongues, and the power of God in their churches is operative. The fastest growing churches in the world are those that support and practice praying in tongues. Great moves of God have been witnessed by these churches, which have witnessed many miracles, signs and wonders. Members of these churches are not better than other Christians – they just get along better in life. As you begin to seek the Lord in helping you get along better in life, you will want to participate in what God has already provided for you through his word. We are to commune with God by way of the Holy Spirit.

Communicating With God

It is important that we begin to appreciate the aspect of language and how it allows us to communicate remarkably. The book of Genesis shows us that fellowship is possible through language and abundant communication. Genesis 11:1 says: *And the whole earth was of one language.* All the people of the earth during this time spoke one language, which resulted in them having excellent fellowship with one another.

Language and communication is quite different today. If I put a group of people together in a room and they each spoke a different language, no fellowship would occur. In fact, they may feel a little uncomfortable. Here's another example: If you traveled to a foreign country and found yourself in a tight situation there, you would be happy to have found someone who could speak your language. But before finding that person, you may have felt a little uncomfortable.

Let's continue to study Genesis to learn God's lesson about the power of language:

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, "Go to, let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, "Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Genesis 11:2-9

Because God didn't like what the people were trying to do, he confused their language so they could no longer communicate or fellowship with one another, which led to their scattering. Consequently, many different languages are spoken throughout the world today. Due to these various languages, our communication has become hindered among people from around the world. If you don't understand another person's language, you will miss certain things. When you understand that language provides ultimate communication with those on earth, how much more do you think that language means in your communication with God? We are to fellowship and commune with God, and the best way for us to do that is through a higher language.

There may be words we want to say to God, but we may have trouble expressing what we truly want to say to him. This happens because our natural language is limited. But because we are limited physically and mentally, God gives us the ability through the Holy Spirit to go beyond our limitations and communicate to him on a higher level. Praying in tongues is not just for a few or for some, but *for all that believe.*

Chapter 4: The Benefits of Praying in Tongues

The purpose of this chapter is to give you spiritual insight into why we're called to pray in other tongues. Some will say that praying in tongues is of the devil, while others will say that it went out with the early church. But let's find out what the word of God says. The primary benefit or reason why you need to pray in tongues is to fellowship with God by way of the Holy Spirit. II Corinthians 13:14 says: *We are to commune with and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.*

True Worshipers

While I was in prayer one morning, God began to deal with me about an area that allows us to commune with and fellowship with God. That area is worship. John 4:22-23 gives us insight into why we need to pray in tongues. In this scripture, Jesus says: *"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

Notice in the latter part of verse 23, Jesus says: *"For the Father seeketh such to worship him.* God is looking for worshipers, so we should obey him by worshiping him. Think about how you shop for a special item. If you know what you want, you may go to a dozen stores and spend several hours trying to locate that special item. When I look for suits, I buy wool suits primarily because they last longer and they don't get wrinkled when I travel. A suit made of another fabric may be nice, but it doesn't hold its shape like a wool suit. I've shopped for a suit and a salesperson would say, "I have just the right suit at a good price." Then I'll let him know that I want a wool suit. If he brings back a polyester suit or a suit with a wool blend, it won't be what I'm looking for, so I won't buy it. Similarly, if your children do all the things that you want them to do, like finishing their homework and making their beds, they'll earn favor in your eyes because they're doing what pleases you. God says in his word that he's seeking true worshipers, so give him exactly what he wants.

The definition of a true worshiper is one who worships *only God* – not man or material assets. Whenever people begin worshiping God, the Lord begins to manifest his powers, healings and special miracles. We can worship God in song by singing in our native language. But if you want to reach the highest level of worshiping God, you need to begin praying to him in other tongues.

I Corinthians 14:2 says: *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God.* Notice three things in this scripture that describes a person speaking in tongues: First, he worships God. Second, he worships in spirit. And third, he worships in truth. You do all three of these things while praying in tongues, which allows you to lay a strong foundation for your prayer life. Of course, God also hears you when you pray in your native language. But if you want to make sure that you communicate to God in a way that allows you to pray about the right things that need to be expressed from your heart, then you should pray in tongues. The bible says that when a man prays in an unknown tongue, he speaks to God – not to men. So, you need to pray in tongues if you want to ensure that you're speaking only to God.

The bible says that when you pray in tongues, it is your spirit that prays. I Corinthians 14:14 says: *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth.* Therefore, if you're not praying in other tongues, your spirit is not praying to God.

Now, let's look at John 14:17: *"Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."* Notice that God is the Spirit of truth. Now think about what we learned in John 4:22-23: 1) God is seeking true worshipers that worship him; 2) God hears those whom worship him in the spirit; and 3) God receives worshipers whom worship him in truth. You can only accomplish all three of these things by praying in other tongues.

Intercession

I'm not sure about you, but I need help in my life. I need help with my wife, children and the ministry that God has charged me with. We ought to get the help that the Lord provides us. In Romans 8:26, it says: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* The Holy Spirit is a "helper," and he helps our infirmities (our weaknesses or inabilities in the natural) because we have limitations in our physical bodies. Because of our physical limitations, God has sent us the Holy Spirit to help us. How does he help us? As the scripture says: *...but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* In other words, the Holy Spirit intercedes by an unknown tongue that you speak forth. This is called intercession.

Moses was an intercessor. He interceded on behalf of God's people, who were in bondage and slaves to the Egyptians. Moses interceded for them by telling Pharaoh, "Let my people go." Finally, Pharaoh let them go. Joseph also was an intercessor. He interceded on behalf of God's people and was exalted as the right hand man of Pharaoh. Joseph used intercession to bring his people out of the famine into a land of provision. So, whenever you intercede, you help others.

The Holy Spirit is Our Helper

We see through scripture that the Holy Spirit is our helper. What is a helper? A helper is an intercessor, advocate, strengthener and standby. The Holy Spirit plays a vital and practical role as a helper in our individual Christian lives. When you drive your car with power steering, the power steering does not steer the car for you. Rather, it helps you steer more easily. The same principle is true concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not walk your life for you, but he will help you live a more effective, productive and fruitful life.

Have you ever played in or watched a tag team wrestling match? Say that you're wrestling with someone and trying to pin him down. The objective is to either beat your opponent right there or, if you get tired, get to the edge of the mat and hit your teammate so he can get in and beat your opponent. Well, you're struggling and worn out while wrestling your opponent, so you cry out, "Help me, Jesus." Your teammate and helper (the Holy Ghost) is standing at the edge of the mat, saying, "That's all right, I'll get him!" We need to appreciate the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to receive his help in our lives.

John 14:26 says: *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* The Holy Spirit is defined here as *the Comforter* or a counselor. What does a counselor do? He helps you. As a pastor, I do a lot of counseling for people who come to me for advice and help. The Holy Spirit is there for us to do the same thing.

The Foolish and the Spiritually Discerned

I Corinthians 2:13 says: *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* Notice how the Holy Spirit teaches: He compares spiritual things with spiritual. Well, the word of God is spiritual. So, when we seek to learn from the word of God, the Holy Spirit will guide us and give us insight into the scriptures. As we continue reading verse 14, it says: *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

An unenlightened person may say, "You go to church and pray *how long* in tongues? And you don't know what you're saying? That's foolishness!" You may have thought the same thing, thinking to yourself, "How can you pray in tongues and not know what you're talking about?" Well, first of all, God says that I won't know what I'm talking about when I pray in tongues. Secondly, when I speak in tongues, I'm not talking to you or me – I'm talking to God. So, you don't need to concern yourself with what I'm saying. I just allow my spirit to pray, by faith. And my faith will allow God to bless me with his promises.

If we look at the natural man, praying in tongues does not make sense. But it's not sense we're using – it's faith. It takes faith to please God. And it's important that we don't let our natural thinking get in the way. Take what God's word says and flow with it. The Holy Spirit is a teacher and he'll begin to teach us if we allow him to do so. But sometimes the things that the Holy Spirit will teach us will appear foolish to a man who operates in the natural because he's not praying in tongues and he isn't discerning what God is saying about a situation. As the scriptures say: *...for they are spiritually discerned...*

God Speaks to Us

Isaiah 28:9-11 says: *Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.* This scripture shows us that God speaks to us about his word when we take time to worship and pray to him in other tongues.

Several years ago, I desired to give a special Easter sermon that would truly speak to the hearts of the congregation. The week before Easter, I got away to a hotel with a fellow pastor to fast, pray and meditate to become open to the particular message God wanted me to give that Sunday. Although the days were getting closer to Easter, I had learned to wait on God. The Thursday before Easter, God revealed to me what I was to teach about. The next day, I asked my ministry team to participate in a certain part of the sermon to dramatize my message. After giving the sermon that Easter Sunday, I received many positive comments about the message. One person said that he'd never heard a sermon taught that way. Another person told her fiancé that it was the best Easter sermon she'd ever heard. I'm not sharing this story to boast about my ability to minister. My objective is to show you what happens when you seek to minister to the heart of others, and only the Holy Spirit can help you do that.

Putting Prayer First

In Acts 6, the word describes how the Grecians began murmuring against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in their daily ministry. So, the disciples decided to delegate tasks and increase their commitment to prayer and their ministry. Notice the order of their commitments in Acts 6:4: *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* We learn here that prayer ranks *above* the ministry of the word. God is not saying that ministering isn't important. Rather, God is saying that we should put him above people. In Acts 13, we learn that God spoke to the people *after* they fasted, prayed and ministered. We all want God to talk to us, teach us about his word and give us direction in our lives. God will talk to you, but if you don't spend time with him in prayer, then you're really saying that you don't have time for his help.

Almost everywhere I go, our ministry is talked about in a positive way. I think about pastors who have led churches much longer than I have, and they seem in their minds that they've got it down pat. I don't ever want to get to a point where teaching becomes systematic. I want to continue being open to change and flowing with the Holy Spirit as he leads me to teach others. While I'm excited about what God is doing in my church, I'd rather let the work speak for itself. It is my desire and purpose to really challenge people and teach them to fall in love with God, putting him first. If we seek first the kingdom of God, then all things will be added to us.

II Corinthians 8:4-5 says: *Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* The apostle Paul is saying here that they first gave themselves to minister to the Lord, *and then* to the Lord's people. So, if you're going to be preoccupied with ministering to the Lord, you must pray in tongues because a true worshiper worships God in spirit and truth.

Edify Yourself

I Corinthians 14:4 says: *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.* The word edify means to build up or to strengthen oneself. For example, if I go to the gym to jog and lift weights, *I* would get the benefit of staying in shape – not my wife, Vanessa. My wife would like to benefit from my exercise routine, but it doesn't work that way. She has to jog for her own strength, and I have to jog for my own strength. Likewise, if I pray in an unknown tongue, I edify and charge up myself. Is *your* battery getting a little weak? If so, charge it up!

Here's a lesson many people still need to learn: Say you get off the road to go to the gas station to fill up your tank with \$2 worth of gas. That gets you only about 15 to 20 miles, so you have to return to the gas station to get another \$2 dollars worth of gas. To avoid this, why don't you just give the gas attendant \$20 to fill the entire tank and be on your way? Sadly, many Christians also are running on empty because they don't build up themselves on a regular basis. But when you regularly pray in tongues, your spirit is continually edified. If you don't see results from your prayers, ask yourself if you are praying enough. You may need to pray more.

Jude 1:20 says: *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost...* What's so awesome about this scripture is that it shows us that you are in control of your own prayer life. It's not under your preacher's control or your mate's control or anyone else's control. If you're not strengthened in your prayer life, then it's *your* fault! We build up ourselves through our faith and by praying in the Holy Ghost. So, when the pressures of life come your way, like having trouble on the job or being sued by someone, you don't need to panic. Instead, you can maintain a sober mind by praying to God about what *he* would do in your situation.

If you're not being strengthened, then you're not allowing yourself to respond to the normal issues that arise in all our lives. Not long ago, I counseled a minister who was upset because he manhandled his wife. He confessed, "I just hit the boiling point. She said the wrong thing, and I just grabbed her and threw her down. I didn't mean it, but I couldn't handle it." Then he said that he wasn't praying in tongues like he needed to. I reminded him of Philippians 4:13: *...I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me...* Christ gave him the ability to do all things, even listening to a wagging tongue!

Does Philippians 4:13 also apply to appropriately handling your out of control teenager? Or responsibly responding to bill collection notices piling up in your mailbox? Or properly interacting with a coworker who is sabotaging your work? Or standing against a sickness in your body that's taking a long time to heal? Yes, Christ allows us to overcome all these situations, as well.

How do we get strengthened? The answer is in Corinthians 14:4: *He that prays in an unknown tongue edifieth himself.* I have no problem spending hours praying in tongues because I receive the benefits in my life. Nothing should come your way that would cause you to freak out. We shouldn't have nervous breakdowns as Christians. But if you're not praying in tongues on a regular basis, you won't be strong enough to endure the inevitable attacks of life.

James 5:13 says: *Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray.* The word "afflicted" in the Greek means suffering trouble. So, the first sentence of this scripture can also be worded: *Is any among you suffering trouble?* What is the answer to this question? Seek counsel from the elders? Stand in the prayer line? Run into the closet and sob? Call mama long distance to cry on her shoulder? No, the answer is *prayer.*

God desires a people who worship him and seek to draw close to him. If God's people would just humble themselves, seek his face and turn from their wicked ways, the Lord would bless them. By praying in tongues, God will provide you with his direction, peace and many other special blessings. Halleluiah!

Chapter 5: Praying in Tongues Strengthens the Inner Man

Too many people don't understand the scriptures, so they don't have a keen insight about what God wants for their lives. It's important to keep in mind that the bible is not written for the carnal man or for those who walk in the flesh. The bible says that he gives wisdom to those who seek spiritual discernment. So, unless you're flowing with the Holy Spirit and developing your own recreated spirit that's born again, then you're not going to be able to discern and gain insight into God's word. And when you don't understand the scriptures, you're not going to live by them and receive their benefits.

Gaining Knowledge of God's Word

Isaiah 28:9-10 says: *Whom shall he teach knowledge* (God wants to provide you with knowledge so that you can understand his scriptures) *and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?* (God wants you to understand the basic doctrines of his word.) *Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.* (A level of maturity must continue to grow in your life.) *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.* (It's the word of God that gives us insight.) We gain knowledge of God's word and his will for our lives by reading pieces of the scriptures – bit by bit, precept upon precept. The problem is that we read pieces of the bible, but we don't gain understanding from it. So, we need to focus on gaining spiritual insight of God's word. That's where verse 11 comes in: *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*

As you start to communicate to God through praying and worshiping him in other tongues, God will begin speaking to you and giving you insight into his word. But you will only receive this insight when you take the time to build up yourself by praying in the spirit. Any serious bible student who doesn't take the time to pray in tongues but dares to teach God's word often takes the world's slant of the scriptures.

By seeking God through a strong prayer life, the Lord will give you insight by unfolding his word to you. If I teach God's word accurately based on my studies at Princeton's seminary, then that's *me* teaching. Now, there's nothing wrong with Princeton's seminary or any other bible college. But if I only have education without the help of the Holy Spirit to illuminate God's word and instruct me, then all I have is the result of my hard work, which is not enough.

Don't Back Away From God's Gifts

When you hear of miracles taking place, do you ever wonder why miracles only happen in those churches that believe in the supernatural? These churches believe that God's signs, wonders and healings are still happening today. Many other churches believe that these miracles went out with the early church or when the last apostle died. It's all a matter of how they believe in God's word. God can only do as much in your life as you allow him to. If you tell God, "I don't believe that" or "I don't want to be bothered with that," God will honor your attitude by stepping aside and backing off from you.

Many people don't believe in praying in other tongues because it makes them feel uncomfortable and they feel like they look stupid praying that way. Well, Joshua also looked stupid walking around the city of Jericho. God commanded Joshua to do it, and he even had a choir in front of him who were ordered to shout! But when he obeyed God, the walls came tumbling down! We can't rely on our own intellect. The scriptures are not to be discerned by the natural mind; they require spiritual discernment. When we don't seek God's wisdom and instruction by way of the Holy Spirit, then we are highly susceptible to missing out on God's will for our lives.

You may have visited churches where people acted fanatical, like rolling down the aisles and hanging from chandeliers. I understand that there *are* people who go off the deep end and aren't quite practicing in order of God's word, but that is no reason to back off from the gifts of God. Just because people get into car accidents, does that mean you're going to stop driving? Although there are people who don't understand spiritual gifts, it doesn't give us a reason to stop receiving what God has promised us in his word.

Tapping Into the Power of God

Like I said earlier, people who pray in tongues on a regular basis are not inherently better than those who don't pray in tongues. But those who do pray in tongues can get along better in life because they tap into the power of God and rely on his help by way of the Holy Spirit. Praying in tongues enables you to live a life in the supernatural as opposed to struggling on your own everyday. So, the challenge for those who do not speak in tongues is to understand the special benefits of praying in tongues.

I Corinthians 14:4 says: *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.* Notice in this scripture that a person who speaks in tongues edifies or strengthens himself, so it *benefits* you. Speaking in tongues charges us like a battery. We choose to charge our own bodies all of the time. For example, we eat meals after going for long periods without food because our bodies would otherwise get weak. The same is true with your spiritual life – you need to strengthen it everyday. You see, you are a spirit and a soul, although you can only see your body. The spirit lives on and on forever, either with God in heaven or with Satan in hell. When I Corinthians 14:4 says that speaking in tongues strengthens you, it's not referring to your physical body, but your spiritual self. However, if we don't take the time to pray in tongues, we might live our entire Christian lives without strengthening our spirits.

You may wonder, "Why does my spirit need to be strengthened?" Well, think about some of the things that you've said or heard, like, "This is too much for me to handle" or "I just can't take this anymore." Of course, everyone needs to be strengthened spiritually. Our strengthening is under *our* control. But if you don't work at it, it doesn't just happen to you. That's why it's important to understand the correlation between praying in tongues and strengthening your spirit.

As we read earlier, Jude 1:20 says: *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.* Praying in the Holy Ghost and praying in tongues both mean the same thing. If you're honest, you'll agree that we're faced with more challenges in the world today than ever. Being overwhelmed with burdens, fears and crucial decisions can lead us to feeling like we can't handle it all. This is why some people commit suicide or kill other people. Without being strengthened, many people can't cope or deal with life. We, as Christians, should be the ones who are strong. We shouldn't be the ones having nervous breakdowns and committing suicide. Neither should we be the ones throwing tantrums and cursing at people. You may say, "Pastor, you just don't know what I'm going through." I may not know what issues you're facing, but the bible says that you *can* deal with it if you strengthen your spirit.

Some people try to deal with life all on their own. They may say, "I'm a man. I can do it." No, you can't. You need the strength of the Holy Spirit. People wonder how some people end up on Skid Row. It's because they've tried to handle life all by themselves. But they found out they couldn't. They lost it. They lost everything, including respect. They couldn't handle the pressure. Some walked away from good jobs and family. I'm not saying that they're bad people or not good enough. It's just that none of us are designed to handle on our own the pressures of this world. That's why God has given us a pressure release valve – the Holy Spirit.

Many of you are so weary, beat down and tired. Some of you say to yourselves, "It's so hard being a Christian." No, it's not. The bible says that the way of a transgressor is hard. Jesus tells us that his yoke is easy and his burdens are light. If you stop straddling the fence, life will be easy.

We Can Do All Things

We read earlier in Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* That's a very powerful verse. It lets you know that you can do *all things*. You can properly respond to a very difficult boss. You can appropriately handle a teenager who's talking back to you. You can spiritually deal with a spouse who's arguing with you. But there's a qualification for handling these issues: You can do all things through Christ, who *strengthens* you. And your ability to do all things is based on your spiritual strengthening. How do you get strengthened? You're strengthened or edified when you pray in tongues.

It's important to learn about praying in tongues in a very balanced, sobering way instead of an emotional way because you can clearly learn the biblical reasons and benefits of it. Believe me, if you don't want to pray in tongues, it's okay with God. It really is. But God's will is that all of his children be filled with the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues because there's a spiritual reason for it. I personally don't know much about automobiles, but I assume that there's a reason for every wire that's under the hood of a car. If I took a wire away because I felt I didn't need it, then I might only drive two miles before the car shuts off. I'd then have to go to the owner's manual (the bible) to see what the car manufacturer (God) explains about how to properly take care of the car.

Think about the issues that have affected your life within the last month that you thought were almost impossible to deal with. To become spiritually strong enough to overcome these issues, you need to pray about them for an adequate amount of time on a daily basis.

If you're preparing to win a football game, you can't expect to be successful if you come to practice to work out only once a week. You may get in shape for a short amount of time, but you must maintain a daily routine if you want to *stay* in shape. When I played football in high school, it didn't make a lot of sense to me that I had to run so many laps during practice. But the coach told me to keep running those laps. I'd be huffing and puffing, and my coach would tell me, "Do another one! You're looking good!" Although my body went through a lot of changes, I was able to help my football team win the championship. How? I did what the coach told me to do.

Coach Jesus is telling us to edify and build up ourselves. Jesus is the head of the church, and we follow him by faith. We may not feel like following him, but we do it anyway. Why? Because Coach Jesus tells us to do it. We may not feel like we're getting edified when we're going through our challenges, but we need to obey him to realize the ultimate benefits.

How much will your spirit man – the *real* you – be strengthened? You ought to be known in this world for being strong so others can marvel at how you handle life's pressures. When they begin to ask you how you handle problems, then you can share with them about God's word and the love of Jesus.

Faint Not

Whether you're faced with a job layoff, financially stressed to pay your house note or struggling to put your son through college, *you can be strengthened*. You may not know how you'll get through your challenges, but God has an answer. God can help you become strong as he begins to bring the answers to you. But you can't buckle under and get weak.

Galatians 6:9 says: *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.* Many times when we're faced with challenges, we tend to get weak and faint. We may even be close to receiving our blessing, but we faint because we are not strengthened. We may realize our darkest moments just before the day of our blessing, so we throw in the towel and give up. But all we need to do to overcome our challenges is to continue strengthening our inner man.

Chapter 6: Releasing the Power of God by Praying in Tongues

The purpose of this chapter is to shed light on how we can release God's power by praying in tongues. In the last few chapters, we examined the various benefits of praying in tongues. We learned that praying in tongues enables us to:

- Fellowship with the Lord by way of the Holy Spirit.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to help us pray.
- Better understand the bible. As we pray in tongues, God can speak to us and increase our understanding of his word (Isaiah 28).
- Strengthen our inner man.

By reading Philippians 4:13, we learned how we can overcome anything. The scripture says: *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.* Think about some of the things that you've said during challenging times in your life, like, "I just can't handle the pressure" or "This is impossible." Now, reflect on what God tells us about how to respond to these negative thoughts: *I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.* When you confess that you can't overcome some of the issues that face all of us in our lives, what you're really saying is that your inner man – your spirit – is not strengthened.

Good Intentions

Often times, we may have good intentions for leading Christian lives. The apostle Peter also had good intentions when he followed Jesus. He may have told Jesus something like, "I'm here with you through thick and thin. I'll go down with you, Jesus. I won't let anybody touch you." Sounds good. But what eventually happened? Peter denied Jesus three times. When the pressure came, Peter practically said, "Jesus who?" Although Peter started out with good intentions, he was not able to come through for Jesus during a real test because his inner man was not strengthened. At the time that he denied knowing Jesus, Peter was not yet filled with the Holy Spirit. But on the day of Pentecost, Peter became filled with the Holy Ghost and began speaking in other tongues. He then started to edify himself, and he continued to strengthen himself throughout the rest of his life.

Building Up Yourself

As we read earlier, I Corinthians 14:4 says: *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; he that prophesieth edifieth the church.* This verse teaches us that speaking in tongues edifies or strengthens us. In Jude 1:20, we read: *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.* We learned here that praying in tongues builds up yourself, so if you're not built up, it's because *you* are not doing the building.

If you've ever listened to a celebrity athlete after winning a major victory, you may have heard him say, "If it weren't for Coach Smith, I wouldn't be anywhere near the top of my athletic career. But because of him, I'm here today." Think about it: Coach Smith may have designed the athletic program, but the athlete had to do all the physical hard work. If he didn't run those laps or throw 300 jump shots each day, he would not have been strengthened and his coach's direction would not have benefited him. Well, we are now serving Coach Jesus, and the bible says that we can do all things through him. But you first have to do your part in building up yourself – praying in tongues.

The purpose of this book isn't to teach you about "having an experience." Praying in tongues is not something that you do once in your life just so you can say that you've experienced it. This book was written to teach you about a lifestyle that *benefits* you. Remember, Paul thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than anyone else. If you're not continuing to strengthen yourself by praying in tongues on a regular basis, you will not be able to deal with issues that will face you in life.

One issue that we all face is forgiveness. Some people say, "They hurt me so much that there's no way I can forgive them," while others may say, "Well, I know that being unforgiving is wrong, but I'm going on that way." How can one person forgive while another cannot? Because one has a strengthened spirit and the other does not. You see, God would not have been able to tell us that we can do all things if forgiveness wasn't included. Otherwise, the bible would have said that we can do all things *except* walk in forgiveness.

Think about when Jesus stood before Pilate on the day of his crucifixion. Pilate asked, "Don't you know who I am?" But Jesus didn't say a word. It baffled Pilate to see Jesus standing so cool, calm and collected. Although pressure surrounded him, Jesus was strengthened. Before facing Pilate, the bible says that Jesus arose early that morning, found a solitary place and prayed for a great deal of time.

I don't leave the house without praying. Since I began pasturing my church, I obviously have an increased motivation to stay strong and in tune with God. But even before I became a pastor, I prayed for an hour everyday. I made up my mind to do it because I understood the benefits of prayer, so I worked my business schedule around my prayer time. Many times, our company's president would come to me asking, "What are we going to do now?" I would be able to return to him in a few hours or the next week with an answer or plan. If you're not strengthened, you'll allow situations to stress you. But if you're strengthened, you'll know that you can rest in the Lord. The ability to think this way comes from taking the time to regularly pray in tongues.

God wants to do special things in our lives that go beyond our wildest dreams. Praying in tongues will enable us to release God's power to do things beyond our human comprehension. Ephesians 3:20 says: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* Each word in this verse is important. The bible could have just said, "according to the power." Instead it says, "according to the power *that worketh in us.*" Whether or not the Holy Spirit's power works in you is up to you and how you conduct your prayer life. The way we allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us is through praying in tongues.

Drawing Closer to God

During the first 10 years of my Christianity, I didn't pray in tongues. I wasn't a bad guy, just an average Joe. However, God was not doing great things in my life. When I first got saved, I was on cloud nine. But as I started developing my personal walk with the Lord throughout my everyday life, my cloud nine began sinking to cloud two. When I questioned this, God clearly answered, "Son, you have to draw closer to me. If you draw closer to me, I'll draw closer to you." Then I recognized that I spent little time with God because he wasn't a priority in my life. Although I loved God and attended church each Sunday, I wasn't drawing close to him.

Keeping a distance from God is similar to having a strained marriage. A couple can be legally married and share the same bed, but not be close to one another. Similarly, just because you're saved and you love the Lord doesn't mean that you're close to him. The best way to draw closer to God and come into his presence is by having a strong prayer life.

Reaping God's Rewards

After God revealed to me what was lacking in my walk with him, I made a decision to make prayer a priority for the rest of my life. And I wasn't just trying it out. I became serious with God and decided to go all the way in my relationship with him. Then God started doing amazing things in my life. He provided me with awesome career opportunities, and he gave me favor by opening many doors. That's when I discovered that Ephesians 3:20 (*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us*) is really true.

If you're not someone who is overwhelmed by God's goodness, then you're not allowing God to release his power and go beyond what you can think or ask for. If you're just hanging in there and struggling as a Christian, but not developing a personal prayer life that involves praying in tongues, then you're not going to fully experience God's amazing powers.

The pressures of life will always face us. But what are you going to do about it? Are you strengthening yourself and allowing God to go beyond your expectations so he can impress you? If that's not a blessing you're familiar with, then you're not releasing his power. Some people are quick to say, "God doesn't require us to pray in tongues on a regular basis." But Jesus said to continue in his word, and part of his word teaches us to pray in tongues. As Jesus tells us in John 8:32: "*And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

Chapter 7: Praying in Tongues Helps Us Walk in Purpose

I appreciate that God's word is applicable and that we can obey it and live by it. I've learned that God's word is like a cookbook. You find the recipe, follow the instructions and enjoy the meal. That's the way the word of God is – very straightforward. Praying in tongues is a controversial subject, but it is important to learn about it and apply it to our lives.

Put on the Whole Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10 gives us a clear insight into the importance of being spiritually strengthened: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Now, God is not just suggesting or recommending that we be strong, he *commands* that we be strong. And he didn't command that we be strong economically, politically or intellectually. He commanded that we be strong *in the Lord*. Also, *who* do you think God is referring to when he says *in the power of his might*? The answer is the Holy Spirit. God is not referring to military, political or economic might. All these areas require our authority and power, but God commands us to seek the might of the Holy Spirit and to be strong in him. He is not saying that we should be less strong in other areas of our lives; we just need to be stronger in him than in anything else.

We read earlier in I Corinthians 14:4: *For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself...* Whenever you pray in other tongues, you edify or build up yourself. This scripture shows us that God wants us to be strong. One way to make sure that you are strengthened is by taking the time to pray in tongues.

Ephesians 6:11 also describes how we can become strong: *Put on the whole armour of God* (not just part of the armor, but the *whole* armor), *that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* Notice the phrase "be able" in this verse. This phrase lets us know that there is no guarantee to becoming strong. Only if you do what God says to do – by putting on the whole armor – will you become strong. If you don't put on the whole armor of God, you will not be able to stand against the attacks of Satan and his demons. These attacks affect all areas of our lives – from our marriages and health to our financial welfare and pursuits in life. Satan is real, and it is important that we see the connection between his attacks and our ability to become stronger Christians.

As we continue reading Ephesians, verse 12 says: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood* (a physical being), *but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world* (demons), *against spiritual wickedness* (wicked spirits) *in high places.* This scripture shows us that the fight is not based on our physical strength, but our *spiritual* strength. Our enemy is not fighting against a man or a woman; our enemy is literally fighting against *spirits*. If you don't take time to pray in tongues, you're going to limit your ability to stand against the wiles of the devil.

As I noted in verse 11, God commands us to put on the whole armor – not part of the armor, but the *entire* armor – so that we may be able to withstand in the evil day. You may agree with my view that we are now living in that evil day. That evil day started the day that Jesus left the earth. Satan then began attacking the church and what God was doing with it. Praise God that one day that will all end! Having examined the scriptures that teach us how to battle evil spirits, the bottom line is that we need to remain standing. Praying – especially praying in tongues – is part of your responsibility to help you to continue standing.

As we continue reading verse Ephesians 6:13, the scripture says: *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day (of danger), and having done all (the crisis demands), to stand (firmly in place).* You see, when you find yourself tried and tested and in the heat of battle, there are key things that you need to do to become victorious. Each crisis demands that you put on the whole armor of God, and part of that armor is prayer. If you don't do the right things to respond to a crisis, then you won't be able to remain standing.

We all know that universities require students to complete a major. A student who has spent a number of years in college may think that he's already completed the courses to fulfill his major. But when it comes close to his graduation, he may receive a letter stating that he's four units short of graduating. He has to complete that last class before walking in victory on graduation day. Similarly, you can think that you're doing all you can do to protect yourself from a crisis situation, but you won't remain standing unless you put on the full armor of God. Many people live in depression and even lose their minds because they live below their God-given privilege to defeat the evil spirits that work against their abilities to stand. That's why it's so important to do all that is biblically required to remain standing.

Resuming in Ephesians 6:14-16, it says: *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* (Those darts get real hot at times, don't they?) *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* Many people stop there when it comes to putting on the armor of God, the provision of God. But, my friend, we should not stop there because God is not stopping there.

Verse 18 continues: *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.* Notice the word "spirit" in this verse. We read earlier in I Corinthians 14:15: *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.* Paul tells us in this scripture that it is good to pray both ways. When you pray in the understanding, you're praying in a language that you understand. But when you pray in the Spirit, you're praying in a language that you *don't* understand – you're praying in other tongues. So, when God tells us to put on the whole armor to remain standing, the best way to continue standing is by praying, which includes praying in tongues.

Air Superiority

Most of us watched the Gulf War on television. It was referred to as the “miraculous war.” This was a war that was won without sacrificing many casualties, thanks to a crucial role played by the United States, which served as part of the allied forces. The reason why it was such a miraculous war is because the allied forces were the first to use the air force to dominate and take control of the enemy. They began to bomb and bring confusion to the enemy by obtaining air superiority before sending in their ground forces. We just read in Ephesians 6:10-16 that we need to put on the whole armor, helmet, sword and shield of God. Ground forces typically use each of these weapons. But God does not want you battling a war without first obtaining air superiority. And the only way you can obtain air superiority is by having a strong prayer life. Without implementing a strong prayer life, you’d be like a soldier with an army ground troop that’s going into enemy territory and subjected to becoming ambushed in a land where the terrain is unfamiliar. On the other hand, if you do maintain a strong prayer life, you would scare your enemy into retreating from your powers.

Let me give you another example. Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho oversees the world’s largest church, which is in Seoul, Korea. His church has more than 500,000 members. Some years ago, an American military chaplain who had ministered a church in Germany came to Korea to pastor a church there. The chaplain eventually met Pastor Cho and told him that he was experiencing excellent success in his own ministry, as people continued to respond to God’s message and the church’s invitation to receive Christ in their lives. The chaplain added that he did not have the same success in his church in Germany, although his message was the same. Pastor Cho responded, “I understand, but let me explain to you: We, in Korea, pray. The demons are bound in Korea. The bible says that Satan, the god of this world, blinds the minds of men who don’t believe. So, in those parts of the world where there is no prayer, men are blinded to reasons why they should receive Christ.”

The power that is moving forth in Korea is the same reason why Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 9:38: *“Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”* The key to evangelism is prayer. The Christians in Korea pray, so the air is free from Satan’s attacks on their churches. How much more of God’s goodness could you realize if you first obtained air superiority? By mastering air superiority, you can take authority over the demonic forces that come against you.

The Unseen World

There is an unseen world out there, whether you choose to believe it or not. God wants you to begin operating victoriously in the unseen world, which is referred to as the “spirit world.” To the extent that you are able to understand the unseen world while living in line with the scriptures, determines whether or not you will operate victoriously in the spirit world. If you don’t understand the spirit world and how it operates, then you won’t see how important it is to pray in tongues on a daily basis. Praying in tongues will allow God to operate on your behalf in the spirit world.

Hebrews 11:3 says: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* This scripture reveals to us that the things that we see are made by things that do not appear. This realm is the spirit world. When we walk by faith, God operates on our behalf, whether or not we physically see him operating in our lives. For example, if you want to buy a house, you'd pray for a house and then move on with your life. But if you don't understand the unseen world, you'd get discouraged after hearing news reports about how increased interest rates were making it more difficult for people to qualify for homes. These news reports would make you nervous because you're only considering what you can see and hear instead of having faith in the spirit world. What you may not know is that God sent your real estate broker to the home of a couple who wants to become a special blessing to someone by selling them their home at an affordable price. You see, the house that you prayed for is already prepared for you. But you may have quit believing for a home before you received your blessing if you depend on what you can only see or hear in the physical realm.

I find the Christian walk so exciting because it's a walk of faith. II Corinthians 4:18 says: *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.* The nice home on the corner in your neighborhood, the brand new sports car that you adore or the beautiful dress that you purchased last month – all these earthly things are temporary. Although we physically see and enjoy them in the earthly realm, God tells us not to focus on them as our ultimate answers. Don't let your earthly vision be the final evidence of your faith – let God's word be your final evidence. You may ask, "How can I see something that I can't view with my own eyes?" The answer is that you must view them with the eyes of God's word and the eyes of faith.

I've discussed the unseen world to make this point: You're not going to pray in tongues on a daily basis if you don't have an appreciation for what happens in the unseen spiritual world. You wouldn't bother praying in tongues if you only focused on how strange you felt speaking in tongues or how you don't understand what you're saying. You must understand that there is an unseen world, so when you pray in tongues, your spirit prays. Your understanding of the language may be unfruitful, but your prayers to God will be answered.

The bible says that when you pray in the Spirit, you pray about things that are most needed. When you pray in tongues, you may not know what to pray about, but the Spirit will intercede for you. However, you must have faith that the Spirit will petition what's best for you.

Discovering Your Purpose

Another reason why you need to pray in tongues is to help you discover and walk in God's purpose for your life. I Corinthians 2:9 says: *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Do you love God? This scripture tells us that God has prepared things for those who love him. But many people stop reading at the end of this verse. The next verse says: *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* The Holy Spirit searches all the things of God to reveal to us what is appropriate for our lives. When we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit will search God's wisdom to reveal the things that we need to know for our lives.

We've read in Ephesians 3:20: *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.* The Holy Spirit goes to work on your behalf when you take time to pray in other tongues. So, unless you pray in other tongues, the Holy Spirit cannot work for you. The bible teaches us that God reveals purpose for our lives through the Holy Spirit. However, many people don't receive a revelation about their purpose because they don't allow the Holy Spirit to work on their behalf. It is important to understand the role of the Holy Spirit so that he can work effectively for us. But we need to consistently pray in tongues in order for the Holy Spirit to work for us. Some people say, "Well, I tried praying in tongues once, but it didn't work for me." God is not someone to try. He said that the *doer* is blessed, not the one who tries.

Philippians 2:13, which is one of our church's foundational passages, says: *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* This scripture is so crucial because it shows us that God works in us through the Holy Spirit.

It wasn't until 10 years after I became a Christian that I made a commitment to having a strong prayer life. I began to pray at least one hour a day, and I have progressed throughout the years since then. During that time, I wanted to continue my career in executive management, which is what I was trained to do. I may have preached on the side, but I wanted to be a businessman so I could make a lot of money and run companies. But four years after I committed to having stronger prayer life, God started revealing my new purpose – pasturing a church. Up until then, I had no desire to pastor a church. In fact, I even hated considering the idea of becoming a pastor. However, as I continued developing an intimate relationship with God, he began communicating with me. Because I took the time to pray in my heavenly language, God was able to direct me in the place where he called me to operate. As Romans 8:28 says: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

Walking in God's Purpose

Most of us satisfy the requirement of loving God. But are you walking in God's purpose? Only those who walk in both God's love and purpose can do *all things*. When walking in both God's love and purpose, even bad things – divorce, bankruptcy, miscarriage – can work out for the good. But again, these things can only work out for the good if you're walking in God's purpose for your life.

The only way to make sure that you're flowing in God's purpose is by taking the time to pray in tongues, which will help you to develop your inner man and increase your sensitivity to God's will for your life. Otherwise, you'd live your life based on following your "hunches." The Holy Spirit – the Spirit of truth – knows all truth, including how you should lead your life. If you don't allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God's wisdom for your life, then you'll miss out on walking in the place where God has already prepared for you. You may be a Christian who is a nice person and on your way to heaven, but you also may be frustrated because you don't truly understand God's purpose for your life. Once you begin relying on the Holy Spirit to guide you, you'll begin walking in God's purpose, and your life will become so much more fulfilling and exciting.

We're not an afterthought. Many parents may admit that their children were not planned, but God knew that each of us was coming and he prepared a road for us. I wonder how many future Nobel Peace Prize winners are reading this right now. I wonder how many future renowned surgeons are reading this right now. I wonder how many future Billy Grahams or Katherine Kuhlmanns are reading this right now. Many people do not realize their talents because they remain on the wrong track in their lives. They're on road A, and God wants them to be on road B. You may have become a schoolteacher because it's a stable job and your mother and siblings were teachers. However, being a schoolteacher may not be what God ultimately wants for your life. Eventually, you may begin wondering what's missing in your life. Well, God knows what's missing. As you spend more time in prayer, God will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal those things that he has prepared for you.

God Has a Plan

The plan. The purpose. The pathway. God has already paved the way for us, and I have personally realized that path for my life. That's why I often say that I am having the time of my life. I think about all those times that I played little league sports, sold butter toffee peanuts to go to camp, went off to college and became a businessman. As I look back at my life, most of the things that I experienced have prepared me for what I'm doing right now. When I wondered over the years what I was doing with my life, God would tell me, "Okay, Ed. You don't see a connection here, but I see a connection and I'll show it to you one day. It will all come together." That is exactly what God wants to do in every one of our lives.

As I've shared, I initially had no desire or intention to pastor a church. God spoke to my heart about pasturing a church. After I was a Christian for more than a decade, Pastor Frank Stuart (the pastor of the church that I attended at that time) asked me to stand up during a church service before he prophesied God's calling for me to lead the flock. Pastor Stuart prophesied: "I am pleased with your abilities. I am pleased with your life. I am pleased with your prayers. I am pleased with your commitment. My hand is upon you to lead the flock, gather my sheep. You shall go forth and lead my people. The time is not far off because of your commitment and your steadfastness. I declared in my word that you must be a good steward. You shall see the day when the sun shall come forth in your ministry."

I had no vision of becoming a pastor. Lead the flock? Although I've always respected Pastor Stuart, I put those words on a shelf because God had not spoken to my heart about it yet. It was not until three years later that God placed a desire in my heart to pasture a church. When God spoke to me, it was clear. I did not question it. I did not hesitate. I told God, "Okay, I'll do it. No problem." From that time on, I began to see how natural it was to think of myself as a pastor. I look at the preparation I had up until the time of my ministry, and I now understand that God was leading me to where I am today. It's awesome what God is doing in this ministry. I couldn't have designed it to work the way it does. I could not have selected the people that come here and work with us. God has done all of this. Everything has worked together all because I made a commitment to spend time before God and allow him to release his purpose for my life. God wants to do the same thing for your life.

Quite some time ago, I made a decision to pray two to three hours a day. One might say, "You're a pastor, so you should pray that long everyday. You have nothing else to do, right?" No, I do. But I was praying an hour to an hour and a half each day *even before* going into the full-time ministry. While I worked as the vice president of a bank, I consistently prayed that long on a daily basis because I understood that there's a spiritual world and I wanted to keep releasing the power of God so that I could expand beyond what I could even think or ask. I also wanted to make sure that my inner man was strengthened so that I could stand against every wile and trick that the enemy would throw my way. I wanted to have the strength to bounce back after facing inevitable disappointments. I purposed in my heart to maintain a strong prayer life, stay in God's word and walk by faith.

My friend, if you don't take time to pray in tongues, you will miss out on that strengthening ability. Like the apostle Peter, you can have good intentions, but abandon God when the pressure comes. Good intentions alone are not sufficient – your inner man must also be strengthened. And it is the power of the Holy Spirit that you must rely on in order to walk in the victory that God has in store for you.

Chapter 9: Praying in Tongues Helps Us Enter God's Rest

Believe it or not, God wants you to rest. Yes, God wants you to serve him, but he also wants you to rest. We all know how important it is to rest our bodies and minds to avoid stress and pressure, but resting physically is not enough. We also need to rest *spiritually*.

If you want to rest physically, you might try to relax by lounging around or lying down. However, while your body grows into a relaxed state, your spirit might still be restless. Your restless spirit could be caused by real life situations, such as long hours at work or arguments with your spouse. You could be relaxing in a comfortable reclining chair, but your mind may be focused on unresolved issues that nag you. You may ask yourself, "How am I going to solve this?" or "Where is the money going to come from?" But God tells you, "Don't worry. Get some rest." We need to learn how to rest in God.

The Holy Spirit Causes Us to Rest

Isaiah 63:14 says: *As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.* We learn from this scripture that it is the Spirit of the Lord that causes us to rest. Keep this scripture in mind because it is an important passage to reflect on as we move on.

None of us has much certainty about what's going to happen throughout our lives. I once talked to a grandmother concerning a custody battle between her daughter's child and the child's father. She did not want the father to have custody of the child because he wasn't a good man. I told her to relax and trust God, but she kept crying, "Oh, I hope he doesn't take my baby." Learn how to rest in God. A challenging situation may be a concern of yours – a legitimate concern. But once you've prayed about matters, you must then rest in God.

Isaiah 28:11-12 says: *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear.* This scripture shows us that we find rest through *stammering lips and other tongues*. The Holy Spirit causes us to rest when we take the time to pray in other tongues.

When I worked as a vice president of a bank, I would leave the office during lunchtime each day to pray. As I drove back to the office after attending my church's noon prayer service one day, the Spirit of God began communicating to me while I stopped at a stop sign. God told me that he wanted me to rest. He reminded me of the scripture that I had been meditating on earlier that day. I began to see a connection between what I read in God's word and experiencing his rest.

I also started to experience God's rest by learning from the Holy Spirit how to cope with issues in my life, particularly my job's pressures. When the bank president would start pulling his hair out while asking me, "What are we going to do now?" I would remain confident that we would find an answer. In fact, my co-workers became more upset with me for not being upset. But I wouldn't get upset because I was resting in God. And guess what? God always came through by giving me an answer. God helped me turn the bank around to make it very profitable, and he has continued to bless it since then.

My desire as a pastor is to minister the word of God so that people understand the scriptures in a way that enables them to receive God's blessings and the best for their lives. Far too many Christians are not resting. They are having nervous breakdowns and taking stress leaves. I am not saying that the issues of this world are becoming less complicated. But the human body was not designed to handle the pressures of this world alone. The most celebrated scholars are blowing their brains out because there are limitations on what we can do physically. This all occurs because we have not learned how to rest in God.

Don't Become Weary

II Thessalonians 3:13 says: "*But ye, brethren, be not weary in doing well.*" How do we not become weary? We avoid weariness by attaining God's *rest*.

I used run track in high school, and some of my classmates became world-class athletes. I learned some things from them about how to approach a race. The 100-yard dash runner's objective is to get out of the blocks as soon as possible and then run at top speed throughout the entire race. When the runner gets up to top speed, he is to relax and rest. That relaxation allows the runner's legs to move much faster and quicker. If you strain your body during a race, you'll slow down because you're fighting against yourself. Likewise, the long-distance runner must focus on resting when competing in a marathon because it strengthens his endurance. As you become a laborer for God, you will begin learning how to rest in him. Otherwise, Satan will knock you out of the race by leading you to feel overwhelmed with the pressures of life, which will tempt you to stop serving the Lord.

The Lord Refreshes Us

Acts 3:19 says: "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*" This scripture teaches us that the presence of the Lord refreshes us. This verse is not talking about mental or physical refreshing, but a *spiritual* refreshing. This kind of refreshing can only come from being in God's presence. And the way that you come into God's presence is by boldly approaching his throne through prayer. The less time you spend in God's presence, the less opportunities you'll have to become refreshed. Yet, we all need to be continually refreshed *desperately*.

In the early 1980s, I was part owner of a computer company that was doing quite well. However, I eventually left the company. Nearly two years later, the company went out of business, but I didn't go into bankruptcy like the other owners did. When they learned that I was earning a good living at another company, they began suing me. Throughout this turmoil, I continued praising God and prayed in tongues on a daily basis. I sought counsel from Christian attorneys, who were shocked when they learned about my situation. One of the attorneys told me, "If I were under the same kind of pressure that you're under, I'd go crazy." Actually, I wasn't under any pressure at all because I was resting in God. And God ultimately came through to help me meet all of my needs.

If you're resting spiritually, you will also rest physically and mentally. In fact, it will even help you age better. Some people can't enjoy life's simple pleasures because their minds are troubled and their spirits are unsettled. God wants you to rest. You're his child, and he doesn't want you to be beaten up and kicked around. He wants you to enjoy the God kind of life that he intended for you to live.

God's Rest Requires Faith

People who are drawn to prayer are catching the vision and are beginning to experience the goodness of God by spending time in his presence. Even though a person may not have the exact answer after leaving the prayer closet, he can rest that God is going to come through for him. For example, let's say that you've prayed for something that took God six weeks to manifest into your life. During that six-week period, you may have been worried, upset and unable to sleep at night. Finally, God comes through for you at the end of the six-week period, and you're ecstatic about seeing the manifestation of your prayers. Now, God heard your prayer the first time that you made your request, and he was resolving your problem throughout the six-week period. Instead of worrying, you could have rested throughout that entire time knowing that God was working through your prayers.

Commit to Spending Time In God's Presence

Praying in tongues is God's pressure release valve for you. But many Christians don't take advantage of this gift. Some Christians backslide and return to the world struggling to serve God. Many say, "I'm getting weary serving the Lord" or "It's too rough serving God." This attitude surfaces because these Christians aren't resting. You must commit to praying daily over a substantial period of time before you begin experiencing God's rest. However, many Christians lack consistency. They'll start praying daily for a while, and then they'll stop. Personally, I don't go out of the house without praying in tongues. I have realized that prayer is my security blanket.

The more responsibility I have, the more I rely on prayer to stay rested in God. One thing that I believe God has blessed me with is the ability to manage diverse projects. I now have more of a positive, global vision since I have implemented a serious prayer life. Now, there are many men and women who pray seriously and consistently. But there are also many people who pay lip service to prayer. I know many pastors who are confused and struggling in their ministries because they don't commit to prayer. On the other hand, there are many pastors who are doing great things because they have caught onto a bigger vision from God. Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho is one of those ministers who has caught onto that vision. Pastor Cho is able to lead a half million members of his church in Seoul, Korea because he stays in contact with God and rests in his presence.

If you're not resting, you are carrying the load all by yourself. You may have days when you have to juggle picking up the kids at school, driving to the dry cleaners and cooking dinner after a long day of work. The scheduling issues are real, so you may be tempted to panic if you're not resting in God. To have a strong prayer life, you have to schedule your life around prayer. You must put prayer at the number one spot on your agenda, and then schedule the rest of your day around that. Unless you approach prayer as your top priority, you are not going to find time to pray.

Jesus wants you to rest. Jesus tell us in Matthew 11:28-29: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* If you're among those who say, "My life is too hard," then you need to learn to rest in Jesus.

Chapter 910: Praying in Tongues Guides Our Decision-Making

Many Christians lead lives full of turmoil and unnecessary pressures because they constantly make bad decisions. Because they don't spend time in prayer, they are not in tune with the Holy Spirit, which leads them to making poor decisions. Praying in tongues allows the Holy Spirit to search and reveal God's wisdom to improve our decision-making abilities.

God Guides Us Through Prayer

We read earlier in Isaiah 28:11: *...with stammering lips and other tongues will he (God) speak to this people...* When you take time to pray in other tongues, God will speak to you and give you direction and instruction for your life. I remember a time when a sister from our church talked to me about how God spoke to her after she began praying in tongues. Before she became a member of our church, she attended another church that didn't teach much about praying in tongues. But when she started coming to our church, she entered one of our classes on praying in tongues. She later came up to me excited about how God began revealing things to her, like moving to a new city across the country. She said, "God is speaking to my heart, pastor. It's awesome how he is making things clear to me." I told her, "Now that you've prayed, wait to listen from God. It's his turn." So, she resumed praying in tongues everyday, and God continued speaking to her heart – as he'd wanted to do for so many years – to give her insight and direction for her life.

John 16:13 says: *"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."* Notice that this scripture points out that the Spirit tells *the truth* – not lies. We need to know the truth about all matters concerning our lives. Many single Christian women have tried to give themselves reasons to justify marrying certain men. Some have told me, "Well, pastor, he *looks* good. He comes to church on Sunday and he *says* he loves God." But what has the Holy Spirit born witness in your heart about this man? I know an attractive woman who met a handsome man who attended our church. Little did she know that he only started attending our church to look for women. They eventually married. Soon after the wedding, he didn't want to go to church anymore. She would ask our prayer group to pray for her new husband. God knew he was slothful all along. But she relied on her girlfriends – instead of the Spirit of truth – to advise her on marrying this man.

We often only look toward God and Jesus while ignoring the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit *is* God, as well. In John 16:13, the scriptures begins: *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit) is come..."* Notice that the word "he" refers to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a thing. He's a person. He's God. The scripture continues: *...he will guide you into all truth...* How much truth will the Spirit guide you into? *All truth*. So, when you're trying to find answers to all areas of your life – like marrying the right person, moving to another city or accepting a new job – the Holy Spirit will guide you into making the right decisions.

The Holy Spirit Has a Voice

John 16:13 continues: “...*for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear...*” Notice that the scripture says here that “he” or the Holy Spirit shall not speak, which means that the Holy Spirit *has a voice*. The scripture also goes on to say that the voice *can be heard*. And the things that he will speak about will not be of himself, but of the things of Jesus and how those things relate to your life. The rest of the scripture says: “*for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*” Think about all the tough situations that you were involved in throughout your life. If you knew what was going to happen in each situation, would you have gotten involved in them in the first place? Probably not, in most cases. The Holy Spirit is here for us to *guide* our lives.

Here’s an example of how the Holy Spirit can guide you to making the right decisions for your life. Say that you’ve consistently prayed for a promotion. You then hear about what sounds like an excellent position that recently opened in another department. But the Holy Spirit tells you, “Don’t take that job.” That’s not the answer you’re expecting. You respond, “That seems like a nice job. Everybody wants that job.” The Holy Spirit remains insistent about passing on that position, so you obey him by not pursuing that job. Meanwhile, all your co-workers tell you, “Wow, you missed out on a good job.” A year and a half later, your company closes that department, and all of the employees within that department are laid off. The company is opening a new department, and the president has asked you to head it up. Now you’re making twice the money that you made before. God knew the things to come, and the Holy Spirit guided you to take the right path. The guidance may have been subtle, but the bible says that God is not in the earthquake or the fire: He’s in the still, small voice.

Enjoy God’s Presence

You need to spend time enjoying God’s presence and getting quiet before the Lord so you can hear his voice. One of the biggest problems for many Christians is that they don’t enjoy being with God. You may find yourself at home on a Friday night without anyone home and no place to go, but you’re fidgety about finding something to do. Just spend time with God. Learn to be quiet and let God speak to your heart. Become comfortable spending time with God. He wants to begin unfolding and revealing things to you about your intimate desires and secrets. He knows what will really satisfy you.

Matthew 11:28 says: “*But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*” God is telling you here, “I see you working hard and struggling. Just come to me. Spend time with me and sit at my feet. I’m crying out for you to come to me.” And the way that you come to the Lord is through prayer.

We must develop a love *just for God* – not a love for the things or blessings of God. When we worship God, we should bow down to him just because we love him. We shouldn’t care who is looking at us. We should love and worship God because we are grateful for what he has done for us and what he has promised to do in our lives. It is *that* attitude that brings blessings and provides insight. God will show you things to come. And based on your trust in him, you will begin to make better decisions.

The Holy Spirit Shows Us Things to Come

Some years ago, I started looking to buy a travel agency to help facilitate our church's missions ministry. I met a woman who owned a travel agency, which had gross sales of more than a half million dollars the year before. The owner's cousin also wanted to buy the agency, but she didn't want to sell it to him. Instead, she sold the agency to me at a good price. She said, "I kept putting off selling this agency, but then you showed up. I like you and what your ministry is about, so I wanted to sell it to you." We shook hands on the deal, and that was it. The travel agency owner and I were both led by the Holy Spirit to meet each other for the ultimate purpose of spreading God's word. There is a wonderful purpose in spending time with God.

Once you begin praying in tongues, God will give you insight about your future, based on his timely direction. As we read in John 16:13, God "*will shew you things to come.*" God revealed to my wife, Vanessa, that I was her husband while we were sitting in church. Her eyes wandered toward my direction, and she asked the Lord, "God, is he the one I'm suppose to marry?" The Spirit of God answered, "Ed is your husband." She replied, "Oh, I like Ed. That's alright." God settled the matter right then. Although we didn't get married that instant, God showed Vanessa the things to come.

Be in Tune with God

Although the bible makes it clear that we seek the Spirit of God for his direction and guidance, often we do not. Part of the problem is that our inner man isn't strengthened, so we're not in tune with God to pick up on his direction for our lives. For example, a pint-sized transistor radio doesn't pick up many stations because its receiver is too weak. However, if you replace the receiver with one that has more watts per channel, the radio will pick up a stronger sound. Our spirits are also like receivers, and we need to strengthen ourselves with more watts per channel – that is, the channel that God is on.

The Purpose of Group Prayer

Some Christians ask, "Why should I take the time to pray in tongues with a group of believers?" Others ask, "If I get edified when I pray, then how do I help others when I'm praying with a group?" These are good questions. Let's look at the bible to find the answers. Romans 8:26-27 says: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: (although we ought to pray about certain things, our mind does not always know the things we should pray for because we have limited knowledge) but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

As you take time to pray in tongues, you can be used as a prayer vehicle to intercede on behalf of others. For example, if you're a long distance runner, you may regularly run 10 miles a day for your own benefit. However, if you decide to join a group to participate in the Cancer Foundation's annual run/walk fundraiser, you will then run for the benefit of the foundation. Similarly, we can attain a group benefit by coming together as a group to pray and intercede on behalf of others.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Acts 12:1-5

I believe that the church learned a valuable lesson from James' murder, and I hope that you learn the same lesson, as well. Formed after the Day of Pentecost, this church was spirit filled, as it prayed in tongues, worshiped God and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, the church initially was not familiar with praying together to take authority over Satan and his demons. After King Herod captured James, I believe that the church did not pray for James as they did for Peter. Otherwise, their prayers for Peter would have been more effective than their prayers for James, and God is not a respecter of persons. Consequently, I believe that James' life would have been spared had the church prayed for him. After mourning James' death, they learned a valuable lesson about the power of intercessory prayer. So, when the church learned about Peter's subsequent capture, they decided to come together to pray for his life.

Now, let's examine how the church prayed for Peter's life. Acts 12:5 says: *...but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.* Notice that the church came together and *prayed as a group.* And they prayed *without ceasing.* As a result, God's power was released, and the angels came knocking on Peter's door.

And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Acts 12:6-12

Now think about it: Peter's miraculous release from prison came about as a result of a group of Christians who unceasingly prayed on his behalf. Although the bible doesn't explicitly say that they prayed in tongues, I believe that they did because not only were they spirit filled, but they also were able to pray unceasingly – a difficult thing to do when praying in one's native language.

It is important and appropriate for Christians to pray in tongues as a group because it combines the church's faith to allow the Holy Spirit to intercede on behalf of the saints. Yet, many Christians just want to pray on their own or in a certain way. There are many scriptures that command that we pray in one accord. The bible also says that we need to participate in all types of prayer – individual prayer, prayer of petition, prayer of binding and losing, intercession, thanksgiving *and* group prayer. We need to pray as a group because it causes the anointing to flow and it creates breakthroughs that only can be produced by a group. In terms of your personal life, you may not necessarily need 500 people praying for you. But we need to have a vision that goes beyond our individual needs, like the welfare of nations, cities and communities. When we pray for things on a larger scale, we begin dealing more seriously with demons and warfare. With this in mind, we need to appreciate the benefit of praying in tongues as a group in one accord.

Praying with the Spirit *and* the Understanding

I Corinthians 14:15 says: *What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* Do you notice the attitude revealed through Paul's words? *He will* pray with the spirit, but it is *your decision* whether or not you will pray with the spirit. In other words, if you're going to pray, you will do so because you *will* to. It is also your decision to either pray with the spirit or in your native language (*...and I will pray with the understanding also...*). Paul doesn't say that we should pray one way or the other. Instead, he recommends that we pray *both ways* (*...I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also*).

If I'm in a business meeting, I choose not to pray in tongues at that time. But if I'm in my home, my church office or at a prayer meeting, I *do* pray in tongues. The point I'm making is this: You can make the decision to either pray individually or pray in tongues as a group. If a church member does not want to participate in an all night prayer meeting given at his church, then that person should not come that night. However, it is biblical that we *will* to pray as a group and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to the Father God and intercede on behalf of the saints.

Group Anointing

When I consider the power of a group anointing, I am again reminded of Pastor Paul Yonggi Cho. His church in Seoul, Korea designated a place called "Prayer Mountain," where people can pray 24 hours a day. One million people from literally all over the world visit there to pray. Signs and wonders are occurring through prayers led there, such as the blind regaining their eyesight and cancer patients getting healed. These miracles don't happen by people just attending church every Sunday. God wants us to wait on him to show his strength so that we would have no doubt that he performs miracles.

God has given us the victory over this earth. We learned through the story of King Jehoshaphat that God is fighting for us. When King Jehoshaphat cried out to God for his protection of his people, the Lord answered him: *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you (2Chronicles 20:17)*. You may say to yourself, “I worship God in my heart, so I don’t need to pray with other people.” It’s true that you may benefit from your own prayers, but don’t limit yourself. Get involved in a group anointing.

God needs a body. Romans 12:1 says: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*. It’s the Spirit in you that prays, but God needs your body. If your body doesn’t yield to spending time in prayer, then God can’t use you. Likewise, when your body is in bed asleep, God can’t use you at that time to preach his word, teach a bible study or share with someone about Christ. God needs groups to take time to pray because there are so many people in this world who need help. And when we come together to pray as a group, we combine our faith to allow God to do his masterful work.

Chapter 11: How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Ask, And You Will Receive

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

Luke 11:9-13

In this scripture, we see that God will grant us our desires if we ask him. And if we ask to receive the Holy Spirit, he will grant us that gift, as well. But you can only ask to receive the Holy Spirit *after* you’ve been saved and become a child of God. Notice in Luke 11:13: *“...how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”* This verse shows us that God is *first* your heavenly Father before you receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is something that you must ask for *after* you receive your salvation.

Speaking in Tongues is a Sign of the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:44-46 says: *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 on the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...* We learn here that the key way to verify that you are filled with the Holy Ghost is that you speak in tongues, as did the Gentiles in this scripture.

Acts 2:4 says: *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* The phrase “began to speak” is key in this scripture. You must first *begin* to speak in tongues for it to happen. Over the years, many Christians have told me similar experiences about how they first began speaking in tongues. They initially thought that they would get a special feeling or something would hit them to force them into speaking in tongues. But they realized that *they* had to begin speaking in tongues, *not God*. As you begin speaking in tongues, the Holy Spirit will give you the utterance or the words that will come forward. The words won’t come from your mind; they will come supernaturally. But you have to be willing to initiate it deliberately, just like everything else we do with God.

Acts 19:1-2 says: *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* Notice here that Paul asked the disciples if they had received the Holy Ghost *subsequent* to their salvation. Yes, you are born of the Spirit. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit that causes you to be born again. But the Holy Spirit also plays another role in your life – a guide, teacher, anointer, strengthener and comforter.

Welcoming God to Move in Your Life

Acts 19:2-6 continues: *And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* Notice in this scripture that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples *after* Paul laid hands on them. Once they received the Holy Spirit, they began speaking in tongues.

When people respond to the invitation of receiving the Holy Spirit in my church, I lay hands on them because it's the biblical way, as we learned in Acts 19:6. However, laying on hands is not the only way to receive the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 5:6, Jesus says: *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."* Many Christians have received the Holy Spirit simply because they hungered for God. For example, a Christian who loves God deeply may pray, "God, I want to know you more and draw closer to you." God may answer that person's prayer by instantly filling him with the Holy Spirit. You see, you can either directly ask God to receive the Holy Spirit or show him through your heart's desire that he is welcome to draw closer to you. Either way, God will know when the Holy Spirit is welcome to move in your life.

So, my friend, it is fundamental for your Christian walk to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues on a daily basis. God is infinite. God is creative. God can make something happen when it may not look like it will happen from our own eyesight. Let God do something special in your life by asking him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. It may be new to you and require a change in your lifestyle, but change is good when it's in God's direction. The bible says that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Once you humble yourself before God and seek his guidance, he will move in a powerful way in your life. No demon in hell can withstand the power of the Holy Spirit. When you understand that, then you will begin living a life that flows with God. And my friend, a life that flows with God is one that is in position to continually receive his favor and blessings in abundance. So, pray on!

#

THE
POWER
of PRAYING in
TONGUES
EDWARD A. SMITH

Pastor Edward Smith's book is destined to be a great aid to developing the Body of Christ because of its thorough examination of the subject at hand. It will answer many questions.

*Bishop Frank Stewart, Pastor,
Zoe Christian Fellowship Los Angeles*

"The Power of Praying in Tongues is beneficial as a powerful tool for development and ministry effectiveness. Read this book, please."

*Bishop Charles E. Blake, Pastor,
West Angeles Church of God in Christ*

"The Power of Praying in Tongues is challenging and thought-provoking and should move believers to seek God's spiritual best. A must read!"

*Frederick K.C. Price, Pastor,
Crenshaw Christian Center*

"I have known Pastor Smith for many years. The fruit of his ministry speaks for itself. I believe that you will be encouraged by his new book, The Power of Praying in Tongues."

*Bayless Conley, Senior Pastor,
Cottonwood Christian Center*



Edward A. Smith, MBA is Pastor of Zoe Christian Fellowship in Whittier California. Formerly a marketing executive, he began the ministry with 15 people in 1988. He is now an international teacher and speaker with a congregation of over 2000 people. Edward A. Smith has been called to help the body of Christ fulfill their God-given purpose. He and his wife Vanessa reside in Southern California and have four wonderful children.

Zoe Christian Fellowship of Whittier
10252 Mills Avenue Whittier, CA 90604
Phone: 562-906-5000 www.zcf.org

Spiritual Growth Price \$7.95

