

ECCLESIOLOGY
THE VISIBLE CHURCH
 Lesson 26

New Testament Spiritual Gifts

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Spiritual gifts are a controversial subject in the church today. Some Christians are strict cessationists (all spectacular gifts were temporary and are no longer in the church) and others are committed continuationists (all the spectacular gifts are in force today). Then there are those who are qualified cessationists (open to look at the possibility of some or all the gifts existing today) and those who are qualified continuationists (open to the reality of the gifts but very cautious).
- B. Most Christians believe that the common or the ordinary gifts are in existence today.
- C. God has told the church that the saints (God's people) are to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:11-12). God does not command the Christian to do the work of the ministry without giving him the grace and the abilities to do it. Christ has given the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts to each Christian to accomplish the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). All the gifts are for the common good and edification of the church (1 Cor. 12:7). If Christians are not using their spiritual gifts, they are robbing themselves and others of ministry.

II. COMMON OR ORDINARY GIFTS

- A. By common or ordinary, it is meant they are non-spectacular. Some have tried to make a distinction between non-supernatural and supernatural gifts, however all gifts are supernaturally based but some are more spectacular than others.
- B. Apostle (Eph. 2:20).
 - 1. Technically, "apostle" refers to the office of Apostle that was given to the original Twelve. Only the Twelve will sit on the throne judging over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28) and in the eternal city there will be twelve foundations with names of the Twelve Apostles (Rev. 22:14). In the technical sense, there are no more Twelve Apostles.
 - 2. A distinction, however, can be made between the office and gift of apostle. Technically the office of Apostle passed away but the gift of apostle still continues in a non-technical sense today.
 - 3. The word "apostle" means "sent one." It would be equivalent to a modern-day missionary or church planter.
 - 4. The Bible refers to others who were called apostles but were not of the original Twelve. James (Gal. 1:9) and Barnabas (Acts 14:14) were called apostles. Others of lesser status were also called apostles, such as Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) and Andronicus and Junia (Rom. 16:7). Modern-day apostles could be pioneer missionaries and church planters.
- C. Evangelist (Eph. 4:11). An evangelist is one who has a special gift of reaching the lost and bringing them into the church. He can communicate the gospel in relevant terms to the unsaved. The evangelist also has the responsibility of equipping and training the saints to do the work of evangelism.
- D. Pastor Teacher (Eph. 4:11). The pastor-teacher (one gift according to the Greek) is one who instructs and cares for Christians. The evangelist deals with the initiation of a person into the Christian life, while the pastor-teacher is involved with the

development and growth of that life. Evangelists are obstetricians and pastor-teachers are pediatricians. Some are paid full time to be pastor-teachers. Others are laymen pastor-teachers without pay. Christians with this gift would be involved in teaching, shepherding, counseling and discipling. Both men and women could have the gift of pastor-teacher, but women cannot use this gift as a teaching or ruling elder in the church. Again a distinction must be made between office and gifting.

- E. Service (Rom. 12:7). This comes from the same root from which we get the word “deacon” which means “one who serves.” Thus we get the word “deacon” which means “one who serves.” This would be service to help others, which would include hospitality and the ability to meet the physical and spiritual needs of others in a practical way. This person also displays a willingness to do the menial tasks without receiving any human glory.
- F. Encouragement (Rom. 12:8). This is the ability to encourage and comfort, move the will, warm the heart and impel to action.
- G. Giving (Rom. 12:8) This is a special ability to contribute money. These folks are able to give liberally whether rich or poor. This gift may also involve the ability to make money and give it for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. Those who have this gift give with great delight and joy.
- H. Leading (Rom. 12:8). This is the special ability of leadership. Literally this means, “one who stands in front.” This would be those who emcee meetings, conduct panels, chair committees, organize people, motivate the masses of people.
- I. Showing Mercy (Rom. 12:8). This is a special ability to deal with the sick and the afflicted. This person is able to identify with and comfort those who are in distress. He has a real sensitivity to the emotional needs of others.
- J. Helps (1 Cor. 12:28). This is the ability to lend a hand whenever a need appears, but do it in such a way that it encourages and strengthens others. In the church, it often appears in those who do behind the scene ministries such as ushering, serving dinners, running the sound booth, preparing communion, working in the nursery or arranging flowers. Hospitality would be included in helps. Those with this gift make it possible for those with the up front gifts to function more effectively. Everyone is indebted to those who have the gift of helps.
- K. Teacher (1 Cor. 12:28). This person has the special ability to explain and to apply the truth of the Word of God. He or she also has the ability to communicate truth to others so they can learn and understand the content.
- L. Administration (1 Cor. 12:28). This says “one who pilots.” It is a special ability to lead and administrate in the local church. Those with this gift can coordinate and administrate. They have the ability to see the overall picture and to clarify long-range goals. With this gift comes the ability to know how to delegate responsibility.

III. SPECTACULAR GIFTS

- A. The problem of religious experience. When dealing with the spectacular gifts, one moves into the area of subjective experience. There are four ways to view experience:
 1. One says that he has had a religious experience and everything about that experience is true and nothing about it should be challenged.
 2. One says that he has not had an experience, therefore it cannot be true. This position says there are no experiences outside of my own limited sphere of experience.
 3. The Bible speaks of experiences and they are true whether one has experienced them or not. All experiences are to be tested by the scriptures.
 4. A person has had a “so-called” biblical experience, but finds it unfulfilling and rejects it as false even though the Bible says it is a legitimate experience.

5. There are some experiences, good and bad, that people have which are outside the spectrum of the Bible. These are religious and psychological experiences that happen in the providence of God, but they are not necessarily biblical or Christian. These kinds of experiences are to be approached very cautiously and if they do not make a person more Christ-like and aid one in the progressive growth in Christ, they are to be rejected and considered to be from an alien source.
- B. The criterion for judging experience. Assuming all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament could be in existence today, there are five major points which qualify this belief:
1. The canon of Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is closed and scriptural revelation is full, complete, supreme and final. Therefore, scripture alone may bind the conscience and judge the validity of any experience.
 2. There are no more Apostles or Prophets who speak or write inspired infallible communication.
 3. All spiritual gifts are to be tested by and submitted to the infallible, inspired scripture.
 4. No person with the gift of prophecy can inherently predict the future.
 5. Much of the modern-day charismatic movement abuses and misuses spiritual gifts. Therefore, the movement must be put to the touchstone of scripture.
- C. Views on the existence of spiritual gifts.
1. Some Christians hold that all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament have passed out of existence, and the Holy Spirit merely uses our natural talents today.
 2. Some Christians believe that all the gifts are active in the church today with full intensity.
 3. Some Christians believe that some spectacular gifts, like tongues, prophecy and healing, were temporary gifts which were needed only in the first century but have passed out of existence today.
 4. Some Christians state that all the gifts are potentially in the church today but not all may be active or operate with the same intensity as they did in the early church.
- D. Reasons some believe the spectacular gifts have ceased (Cessationists).
1. The spectacular gifts (prophecy, tongues, miracles, healing) were given to the original Twelve Apostles (or their representatives) as sign-gifts for the propagation of the gospel and/or attestation to the Apostles and their message in the first century (Eph. 2:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).
 2. Once the church had matured and/or received the inspired New Testament canon of scripture, there was no longer any need for the spectacular gifts.
 3. It is implied in 1 Cor. 13:8-13 that tongues and prophecy ceased.
 4. Church history leaves them out, for after the second century there is very little or no emphasis on the spectacular gifts.
- E. Reasons some believe the spectacular gifts continue today (Continuationists).
1. No scripture asserts that any of the spectacular gifts were given only for the purpose of attesting the Apostles' ministry and message.
 2. There are several clear verses that affirm that the gifts are also for the purpose of edification (1 Cor. 12:7; 14:3).
 3. First Corinthians 1:4-9 implies that all the gifts given to the Corinthians would continue to the Second Coming of Christ.
 4. Hebrews 2:4, when speaking of "signs, wonders and miracles," also includes "the gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will." If Apostolic attestation

- is the criterion of a spiritual gift being special and temporary, then we could conceivably be required to remove all the spiritual gifts from today's church.
5. First Corinthians 13:8-13 seems to be a reference to the Second Coming, not the closing of the canon or maturity of the church. Spiritual gifts will cease "when perfection comes," "we shall see face to face," and "I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."
 6. Neither tongues nor prophecy nor miracles ceased at the end of the first century. They continued at least into the third century and have recurred sporadically if not consistently ever since. The relative disappearance of these gifts in the mainline church can be attributed largely to the abuse in certain sectarian circles.
 7. Exegetically it is impossible to prove conclusively that the spectacular gifts have ceased. Cessationism must be proved deductively and theologically, not exegetically.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- A. Message (word) of wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8). This gift is not mentioned anywhere else in scriptures nor in any other early Christian literature. This spiritual gift is *the ability to bring practical, spiritual insight in a timely way to a specific problem*. It is an extraordinary ability to apply the Bible to any situation.
- B. Message (word) of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8). This gift is mentioned only here so there is no biblical or historical help for us to discern its true meaning. This spiritual gift is *the ability to deal with the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the Word of God*. It is perceiving and systematizing the great truths of the bible. This gift could also be keen insight into specific problems, such as when the Apostle Peter had Holy Spirit leading on Ananias and Sapphira's real problem of lying to the Holy Spirit. Modern-day charismatics say this gift is getting a special word from God, even inspired revelation, but that does not seem to be its meaning.
- C. Faith (1 Cor. 12:9). This gift is *the ability to believe God's power to supply and provide*. This is the ability to see something which needs to be done and believe God will do it even when it looks impossible. Some think this gift is linked with miracles, healings and casting out of demons, but there is no reason to think that this is nothing more than extraordinary faith that believes God to move mountains. This is not the kind of faith we hear about today which dogmatically and defiantly asserts, "You are healed!" or "The pain will go away!" or "You will not die!" when in reality the pain has not gone away, the person is not healed and dies anyway. That is presumption and self-deception, not faith. Yet, in some situations, God does grant extraordinary faith and supernatural things happen.
- D. Healing (1 Cor. 12:9)
 1. This gift is *the ability to heal physically, psychologically and spiritually*. Literally this says, "gifts of healings," (plural). This has caused some to think this refers to healing on different levels—physical, psychological and spiritual. It may also refer to different levels of the healing gift to deal with various types of diseases. A person may have the gift to be the instrument God uses to effect supernatural healing (a divine healer), or he might have a natural gift of healing coupled with the gift of faith to be used in healing the physical body through natural means (a medical doctor). There may also be psychological, inner healing by supernatural means or by the skills of a talented counselor with the gift of faith.
 2. When we look at the New Testament, almost all healings done by Christ and the Apostles occurred immediately and the person was instantaneously restored to health. Today most healings are not instantaneous but are progressive. There appears to be a different intensity of this gift today and not everyone who is

prayed over by one having the gift of healing is healed. Surely if the Apostle Paul could not heal Timothy of his stomach disorder (1 Tim. 5:22), or Trophimus of his severe illness (2 Tim. 4:20), then we cannot expect 100% accuracy of modern day healers. We do not expect every person who is an evangelist to lead every person to Christ he witnesses to, so why require every healer to heal everybody he prays for? God is the healer and he heals whom He pleases just as he saves whom He pleases. However, if a person claims the gift of healing, then there must be some fruit or there is no gift.

3. Many of those who abuse healing today do so on a faulty view of God, man and sickness.
 - a. They say all sickness is caused by Satan/demons and can be cured by casting out demons. To be fair, some sicknesses are caused by demons and will be cured when the demons are cast out but most sicknesses are not due to demonic activity.
 - b. They say God does not want anyone to be sick and wants all people to be well because all sickness is the result of sin and Christ died for all sins. Healing is in the atonement and those who truly believe will be healed.
 - c. They say that what keeps one from getting a healing is that he does not have enough faith, but if a person believes strong enough, long enough and hard enough, a healing will take place.
4. A quick review of Scripture will show this view to be faulty.
 - a. First, God is ultimately behind all sickness and suffering (Ex. 4:10-11; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:5-7; 1 Sam 2:6-8).
 - b. Second, all sickness is not the result of sin or Satanic activity (John 9:2-3; Job 2:6; 2 Cor. 12:7-9).
 - c. Third, it is not God's sovereign will to heal everybody (1 Cor. 12:7-9; John 5:1-9; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20).
 - d. Fourth, the normative pattern for healing today is the elders anointing with oil and praying over the sick (James 5:14-16).
5. There are some Christians who believe that healing is an integral part of the atonement of Christ. They say Christ died to heal everyone physically as well as spiritually, and if a person is not healed he or she did not exercise enough faith. They believe the words, "By His wounds we are healed" (Isa. 53:5) and the quoting of Isaiah 53:5 in Matt. 8:16-17 ("He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases") refers to Christ dying for all sickness, making healing possible through the atonement.
6. The objections to healing in the atonement are:
 - a. Isaiah 53 is speaking about spiritual infirmity, not physical infirmity.
 - b. Matthew 18 is speaking of our Lord's earthly ministry, not His work on the cross.
 - c. If healing is in the atonement, then no Christian should ever be physically sick. Since Christ forgives sins completely, then He must be able to heal completely or His death would be of no effect.
 - d. If healing is in the atonement, then no Christian ought ever to die physically. Death is the result of sin.
 - e. If healing is part of the atonement then it would have been declared so in the Book of Acts and Romans and First Corinthians, but there is nothing mentioned about healing in the atonement.
 - f. For the sake of argument, let's assume for a moment that healing is in the atonement. If we believe in particular redemption (limited atonement), then those that Christ died to heal physically will be healed, but not others.

7. There are many abuses today by those who claim to have the gift of healing. So much of the healing movement today is man-centered and entertainment-centered, which certainly does not glorify the Lord Jesus. When Jesus and the Apostles healed, there were no hyped-up meetings, no TV media to please, no excessive emotionalism and no crowd manipulation. It just happened as a matter of lifestyle and without a lot of fanfare. Most modern-day healers and the healing movement are dependent upon miracles to keep their ministries viable. Therefore, more and more so-called spectacular healings and miracles have to be contrived in order to keep the people coming and the money flowing into the collection plates.
 8. Some criteria we might use as to whether a person has a genuine gift of healing are:
 - a. He heals in the name of Jesus the Lord (Acts 3:16).
 - b. He claims no healing power in himself (Acts 3:12).
 - c. He gives all the glory to God for all healings.
 - d. He does not take money for his healings (Acts 3:6).
 - e. He actually sees healings in his ministry on a consistent basis.
 - f. He is willing to submit all supposed healings to validation if asked to do so.
 - g. He is willing to use his gift anywhere not just mass meetings.
 9. In my opinion, the gifts of healings are not here today with the same intensity as when Christ and the Apostles were on earth. Yet, all healers must meet all the biblical criteria or they are false healers.
- E. Miracles (1 Cor. 12:10).
1. *This gift is the ability to release the power of God in a unique and supernatural way.*
 2. This literally says, “the workings of powers.” It is in the plural so it may indicate different levels of miracles.
 3. Christ and the Apostles did miracles such as putting back a cut off ear, shaking buildings, walking on water, raising people from the dead, etc. (2 Cor. 12:12).
 4. There are men and women today who claim to have this gift as there have been those who claimed to have it in the past, but they don’t seem to meet the biblical criteria.
 5. At the highest level, I do not believe there are people today with the gift of miracles. However, if the gift of miracles means the ability to cast out demons, as some claim, then I believe that this gift is most certainly in the church today. In fact, as the American culture grows more godless and pagan, there will be even a greater need for the gift of casting out demons.
- F. Prophecy (1 Cor. 12:10).
1. There are three ways Christians view prophecy.
 - a. Some say there is no gift of prophecy today because prophecy was direct, inspired revelation from God. This type of prophecy passed out of existence after the first century with the completed canon of scripture. For those people, 1 Cor. 12 and 14 are not relevant for the church today and are in no way a normative practice.
 - b. Some say the gift of prophecy in the New Testament is essentially declarative or preaching and place the gift in the area of illumination. The emphasis is not on foretelling but forth-telling the already revealed Word of God.
 - c. Some say that prophecy refers to Holy Spirit impressions, which are not inspired or infallible, and are placed into the category of guidance.

2. Strict prophecy in the Old and New Testaments involved receiving inspired revelation from God and giving it to the people in a language they could understand, for in those days there was no closed canon of 66 books of the Bible.
3. In a technical sense, there is no more inspired, infallible prophecy because the canon is closed and God is giving no more infallible revelation. However, a distinction can be made between the office of prophet and prophecy as a gift as found in the New Testament. There are no more Prophets who formed the foundation of the church and gave infallible communications (Eph. 2:20). However, in a non-technical sense, there may be a type of prophecy today.
4. This gift would be *the ability to speak the mind of God whether that be by preaching the Bible or telling something which God has spontaneously brought to mind*. This lesser or lower form of prophecy is not infallibly inspired and is subject to error, and that is why it had to be judged and tested (1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:19-22).
5. Those who had the official office of prophet spoke infallibly and what was said was always true and came to pass (Deut. 18:22). However, there may be a lower form of prophecy today which continues but is not infallible and is always mixed with error. Therefore it is not intrinsically revelatory (Acts 21:4, 10-11, 33).
6. This lower form of prophecy operates through the Holy Spirit's enlightenment and directed impressions. God still works providentially in the lives of Christians and can prompt inner thoughts in the minds of His people which can be a blessing to the church. The main use of the gift of prophecy today is to build up, encourage and console God's people (1 Cor. 14:3).
7. The words "prophecy" (Rev. 19:10; Acts 15:32; Acts 17:10-13) and "revelation" (Eph. 1:17-18; Phil. 3:15) are sometimes used in a non-revelatory sense. So it is incorrect to say that the words "prophecy" and "revelation" always refer to inspired, infallible communication or writing.
8. Prophecy comes to the people in a language they understand, and it seems to be a gift that many in the congregation may exercise (1 Cor. 14:31). Christians are encouraged to prophecy.
9. How should a Christian receive a prophecy from another Christian brother or sister? Merely receive it as information. It may or may not be true. If there is truth in the prophecy, you will be convicted, or, if you are not convicted, the Holy Spirit may confirm the truth with several other prophecies or through circumstances. We neither totally reject or credulously accept these prophecies. We wait and see.
10. Scripture takes precedence over any present lower form of revelation. Unfortunately, many people think receiving Holy Spirit impressions are more striking, personal, mystical and inexplicable and, therefore, carry as much authority as the inspired and infallible Bible. They are mistaken because all subjective experience must be put to the touchstone of scripture, that is our final rule of faith and practice.
11. Because prophecy operates in the realm of subjective experience, it must meet all the biblical criteria before being accepted.
 - a. All prophecy is subject to the inspired Bible and never contradicts it.
 - b. All prophecy is to be tested by the church and the elders, in particular.
 - c. Any prophecy which is not primarily for building up, encouraging and consoling God's people is suspect.
 - d. People giving a prophecy must be willing to be publicly questioned by the elders and/or the church.
 - e. All prophecies used for a power play, mind control or draws attention to self should be rejected.

- f. All prophecies must be prefaced with “I think,” or “It appears to me,” or “It seems as though the Lord is saying to me.” No prophecy today is inspired and no prophet is infallible.
 - g. Any prophecy given today in which a person says dogmatically, “Thus saith the Lord,” or “The Lord told me to say this,” is suspect.
- G. Speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 12:10).
1. There are three basic views on the gift of tongues today:
 - a. Some say the gift of tongues has ceased and any so-called tongues must be put into the category of fleshly, sinful activity or demonic activity.
 - b. Some say tongues is speaking in a cognitive human language which can be reduced to writing.
 - c. Some say that tongues are divine, unintelligible utterances used primarily to worship God (Acts 2:11; 1 Cor. 14:2).
 2. As a qualified continuationist (open but cautious), I believe the gift of tongues is in the church today. The gift of tongues is *the ability to speak forth a language one has never learned, and which he or she does not understand*.
 3. The first use of tongues in the Bible is Acts 2:1-13. Many Jews from various parts of the Roman Empire were gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Pentecost. These Jews and Jewish proselytes spoke many different languages. The disciples of Christ had been commanded to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did not come on them because they were in an all-night prayer meeting or because they were baptized by the Holy Spirit. In the sovereign wisdom of God, the Day of Pentecost was predetermined, and they spoke in tongues because they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). They “began to speak in other tongues” (languages/*dialectos*). These tongues seem to be foreign languages which are reducible to writing. The Greek word for “other” is *heterros*, which means “tongues of a different kind.” We are told that each visiting Jew understood the words of the disciples “in his own language” (Acts 2:6). Every language spoken on the Day of Pentecost was a known tongue, perfectly intelligible and reducible to writing. There can be no question of the supernatural character of the gift. The miracle was the speaking of a language previously unknown to the one speaking. There are a few scholars who think the disciples spoke in unintelligible utterances on the Day of Pentecost but the Jews from other countries heard their own languages; that is, the Holy Spirit supernaturally caused them to hear in their own language. It was gibberish because they through the disciples were drunk. This then would be a miracle of hearing, not speaking.
 4. Acts 2 is the only place in the Bible that tells what tongues are. At least in this context, the evidence seems to favor foreign languages and not gibberish, heavenly language or divine utterances.
 5. Those who believe the tongues of 1 Cor. 12-14 are literal foreign languages as those stated in Acts 2 give the following reasons:
 - a. Tongues should be translated languages.
 - b. Acts 2 is definitely speaking about foreign languages and the reader would not think tongues should be anything else in First Corinthians.
 - c. There is a mention of the “language of men and angels” in 1 Corinthians 13:1, but there is no reason not to believe that the tongues of angels is a cognitive language and not unintelligible utterances.
 - d. Tongues according to First Corinthians 14:22 are “a sign . . . for unbelievers” (not believers) of the supernatural workings of God to confirm the gospel to them.

- e. Corinth was a city which drew military, merchants and tourists from all over the Roman world. When these people visited the Christian churches out of curiosity, they may have known little or nothing of the common Greek language, so in the assembly someone stood up and supernaturally spoke in their language or dialect most likely giving the gospel. There would be an interpretation of the words spoken by the speaker so everyone would know what was said.
 - f. Tongues are used in the public meetings of the church in the Bible and not for private use. If this is a correct understanding, then tongues today would be limited to certain situations where the gospel needs dissemination.
6. Those who believe the tongues in 1 Cor. 12-14 are divine utterances and different from Acts 2 give the following reasons:
 - a. In First Corinthians, the tongues need an interpretation whereas in Acts 2 no interpretation was needed. The interpretation was needed because it was a divine utterance which no one understood and therefore needed supernatural interpretation (1 Cor. 14:28).
 - b. Tongues is a prayer language where one “does not speak to man but to God” (1 Cor. 14:2). The person may be praying but it is prayer in the spirit, not necessarily with the mind. It is a prayer language of praise where one can give divine utterances and sometimes do it through singing (1 Cor. 14:14-15).
 - c. The gift of divine utterance may be used in public but if it is there is always to be an interpretation (1 Cor. 14:27-28).
 - d. The speaker in tongues does not have to speak and can speak quietly in his mind without any verbalization (1 Cor. 14:28).
 - e. While divine utterances can be used publicly on occasion, it is best used in private as a prayer language (1 Cor. 14:18-19).
 7. How do we solve the problem of whether tongues is a foreign language or a prayer language? There are no easy solutions. For myself, I believe tongues may be literal foreign languages at times or divine utterances of praise. Just in the same way there is a primary and secondary meaning to prophecy (no inspired, infallible prophets but fallible prophecies). So there may be different levels of tongues given to God’s people. In 1 Cor. 12:10, tongues (*glasson*) are in the plural which could open the door to different levels/types of tongues. Most modern tongues (divine utterances) are something less than foreign languages but a prayer language to bless some Christians who in turn are made stronger in faith to bless the whole body.
 8. Tongues seems to be the least of all the gifts. When ranking the gifts to the church in order of importance, the Apostle Paul puts tongues last (1 Cor. 12:27-28). While all spiritual gifts are indispensable for a proper functioning of the church, there are some which are honored, respected and valued because of their function within the church.
 9. Tongues are not for all Christians (1 Cor. 12:29-30). It is clearly stated that all do not speak in tongues. The Greek negative particle *mai* expects a negative answer: “Do all speak in tongues? No.” This verse clearly teaches us that tongues does not make a person a first-class Christian, more saved or more spiritual. It is a gift God gives to some Christians to build them up so they can edify the whole church.
 10. Tongues are not related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act of God whereby the Christian is placed into eternal union with Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4-6; Gal. 3:27). The baptism of the Holy Spirit first occurred on the Day of Pentecost and every Christian since Pentecost

is placed into Christ, forming the body of Christ, by Holy Spirit baptism at the moment of conversion (1 Cor. 12:13). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not evidenced by speaking in tongues, for all Christians do not speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:29-30). In fact, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not experienced at all. It happens at the moment one trusts Christ as Savior and Lord. Nowhere is the baptism of the Holy Spirit commanded for a believer—it is not a work but an act.

11. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a special form of power because 1 Cor. 12:13 says, “we were all baptized by the Spirit into one body.” This is the only place we are told what the baptism does—it forms the body of Christ. Some Charismatic Christians want to translate Acts 1:5 to say, “In a few days you will be baptized by the Spirit” as “with” or “in,” making it refer to receiving special power in a Spirit baptism experience sometime after one’s conversion to Christ. Because 1 Cor. 12:13 must be translated “by,” so must all the other references to the Spirit baptism be “by,” not “with” or “in.”
12. These charismatic brethren would have us believe that there are two baptisms of the Holy Spirit—one to put us into Christ, forming His body, the church (1 Cor. 12:13), and one to give us power for living (Acts 1:5). It is poor exegesis to have two baptisms of the Spirit. However, tongues are related to the filling of the Spirit which occurs thousands of times after conversion (Eph. 5:18). But tongues is not the evidence of one being filled with the Spirit because all do not speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). Furthermore, the Bible never says that Christ spoke in tongues and he was the most spiritual man who ever lived. Also in Ephesians 5:18-21, tongues is never mentioned as a result of being Holy Spirit filled.
13. Tongues are not to be sought first (1 Cor. 12:31). While the church is not to forbid tongues (1 Cor. 14:39), Christians are exhorted to seek and desire greater gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). Greater gifts would be prophecy, teaching, faith, evangelism, etc. The Apostle Paul seems to be saying that tongues is the least of all the gifts and all other gifts should be sought before seeking tongues. Any gift is greater than tongues.
14. How can we explain this tongues phenomena and how can we fight against the abuses?
 - a. It might be fraud—people fake the gift because they are told they are not saved or spiritual if they do not speak in tongues.
 - b. It might be emotionalism—a person puts himself in an emotional state and mystical trance and begins to babble like in hysteria or drunkenness.
 - c. It might be self-hypnosis—a person gets into a hypnotic state so as to loosen the tongue from the mind.
 - d. It may be Satanic deception—Satan is the great counterfeiter and can produce tongues in a person through demons.
 - e. It may be the real thing—a person is made spiritually strong through the experience of tongues and can in turn build up the body of Christ. If an experience does not make a person more Christlike, it is not the real thing.
15. The biblical criteria for the use of tongues are:
 - a. Tongues are not connected with the baptism of the Holy Spirit sometime after conversion to Christ (1 Cor. 12:13 cf. Acts 2:4).
 - b. Not everyone can or will speak in tongues (1 Cor. 12:30).
 - c. Tongues is just one of the spiritual gifts and may be the least of all the gifts.
 - d. God gives the gift of tongues to whom He pleases (1 Cor. 12:7, 18).
 - e. Tongues may be sought but they are not high on the list of important gifts (1 Cor. 13:39 cf. 1 Cor. 12:27-31).
 - f. Tongues does not make a person more mature or more spiritual than those who do not have the gift (1 Cor. 14:37-38).

- g. The primary place to use the gift of tongues is in private (1 Cor. 14:18).
 - h. If used publicly, there must always be an interpretation and no more than two or three can speak (1 Cor. 14:27-28).
 - i. Everybody in the public worship service is not to speak in tongues at once (1 Cor. 14:23).
16. Probably no gift is more abused and misused today than the gift of tongues.
- H. Interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:30). This is *the ability to interpret a foreign language one has never learned or to give an intelligible interpretation of an unintelligible verbal utterance.*