

ARE THERE OTHER PURPOSES TO TONGUES?

1. PRIVATE PRAYER LANGUAGE

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Ro.8:26)

- Some see this verse speaking about tongues. Speaking with groanings. The subject of tongues is not anywhere in this context.
- Paul is talking about the work of the Spirit of God in the lives of the elect. The Spirit that is in us is in constant communication with the Father. This is inter-trinitarian communication. Notice that it cannot be uttered. Yet with tongues syllables are uttered.
- What the Holy Spirit communicates to the Father on our behalf is something that cannot be put into human language. Paul's point is that the Spirit does that on our behalf. To try to connect this to tongues is a faulty handling of the text.

“¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” (1Co.13:1,3)

- Paul's point is not whether he did this or not. His point is if he did speak in some angelic language, it would mean nothing without love. Paul is giving using hyperbole. If Paul did speak in some angelic language even that in itself has no value.
- Paul is showing that he is using exaggerated language to make his point. Charismatics take the hyperbole of verse 1 and ignore the hyperbole of verse 3. We do not see too many charismatics suggesting to burn their bodies.

“²For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.” (1Co.14:2-3)

- This is useless and is not a compliment. The one who speaks in a tongue speaks to God not men?
- The purpose of the gift of tongues is not to speak to God. The purpose of the gift of tongues was to speak to men (1Co.14:21-22).
- Today many have turned tongues into a so-called prayer language which is what Paul is condemning.
- When you supposedly speak in a tongue you are not speaking to men as intended. You speak to God and you think God hears you. Paul says, nobody understands you. And that is not good. So stop doing this.



2. SELF-EDIFICATION

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:” (1Co.12:7)

- What other spiritual gift has been giving for your own edification? Gifts are for the edification of others not self (1Co.14:26; Ep.4:12).
- Tongues, or any other spiritual gift, is not about edifying self.

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful” (1Co.14:14)

- If my mind is unfruitful what is the point? It is like speaking in the air (1Co.14:9). That is no compliment.
- Whatever is going on in 1Co.14:14-16 is supposed to be public not private.

“What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding” (1Co.14:15)

- Scripture never encourages us to disengage our minds in order to pray or worship. We must have our mind engaged.

