

# Introduction



## What is Speaking in Tongues?

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“Pastor, I desperately need to talk with you as soon as possible. When can you come over?” my friend asked.

“Skip, I’ll be there in just a few minutes. I’ll finish some work here at the office and come right over,” I responded.

I hurriedly finished my office tasks and phoned my wife. “Dee, I’ll return as soon as possible. I’m answering an emergency call from a friend.”

Skip attended the Lutheran church and had experienced the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the accompanying prayer language. Although he wasn’t a part of my congregation, I wanted to help him with whatever he faced. I drove to his home and knocked on the door.

Looking rather grave, Skip opened the door and invited me in. We sat down in his living room and he immediately related the reason for asking me to visit him.

“Pastor, I’ve got a real problem that I need to share with you.”

“What’s wrong, brother?”

“The other day I was spending some time with the Lord. As I praised Jesus, I began speaking in tongues. As I continued worshipping him with my prayer language, I started thinking about my golf game. Have I sinned?”

Relief flooded me! My mind anticipated a confession of adultery or lying or cheating. But here was Skip merely worried because thoughts of golf entered his mind while he praised Jesus in tongues.

“No, Skip, you haven’t sinned. Let me explain what happened. Let’s look at the Scriptures and write down verses that will relieve your worry.”

With Bibles in hand, we turned to 1 Corinthians 14:14.

I asked Skip to read the verse out loud. Skip proceeded to read the apostle Paul’s words, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”

“Please notice the part of Paul that prayed when he spoke in tongues,” I requested.

“Well, Pastor, it says his spirit prayed.”

“That’s right. Paul’s tongue uttered words that came from his human spirit. Skip, what does it say about his mind?”

“It was unfruitful. What does that mean?” he inquired.

I explained that we speak words from the thoughts we form in our minds. Our tongues are instruments of our minds that carry out instructions from our brains.

“When speaking in tongues, we pray from the human spirit, not the mind. The Holy Spirit who dwells in the human spirit provides the words and selects the language we speak. The human brain is not involved when we speak in tongues. Our

minds are what Paul calls *unfruitful*. This word *unfruitful* means barren or without fruit.”

“So, Skip, your mind was uninvolved as you were praying in tongues the other day. It was free to create any kind of thought it wanted to generate. Your spirit was truly worshipping Jesus as the Holy Spirit supplied you with the vocabulary. So you didn’t sin—you simply experienced what Paul described in 1 Corinthians 14:14. Your spirit prayed in tongues, while your mind remained uninvolved.”

“I feel so much better. I’ve been worried for days that somehow I had missed God’s will.”

The human spirit and the human mind are not identical. Acknowledging the difference between these two is crucial to understanding speaking in tongues.

Throughout this book, I define speaking in tongues as an activity of the human spirit as it is energized by the Holy Spirit. For example, Acts 2:4 records that Jesus’ followers, “were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” This speaking in languages unknown to the mind is what we call tongues.

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***Demystifying Speaking in Tongues***

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