

Can You Be Spirit-Filled Without Speaking in Tongues?

I was raised old-school charismatic style! I grew up with my parents playing Kenneth Copeland's cassette tapes in our beat-up car radio on the way to work. (Anyone else remember saving an unraveled cassette with a pencil in hand, after a cheap radio attacked it?) I can still hear the familiar crackle as that radio belted out the principles we lived by every day.

Friday nights were family prayer times. Everyone got together to tarry until the power came. Anyone who is following me here knows this one thing: Speaking in tongues was part and parcel of the charismatic circle. Truthfully, you never felt like you had arrived until you could join in the crescendo of passionate tongues as praise and worship came to an end during Sunday morning service.

You can well imagine then how stuck I felt being one of the only family members who just never got Spirit-filled. My dad prayed for me. My grandparents prayed for me. In fact, I was the first in line at every revival service to have that pastor pray over me. My request? "I want to speak in tongues!"

Our church culture has changed quite a bit since, but what has not changed is the power that tongues bring to your prayer life. Having gone around this mountain quite a bit, I realized that there was a reason the Lord made it that much harder for me to receive this gift. No, the Lord was not punishing me. Rather, He was revealing Himself to me in a new way.

The stories came out as Craig and I came to answer the question from one of our listeners who asked, "Does speaking in tongues = Spirit-filled?" and I revisited the intimate encounter I had with the Lord.

This story has a happy ending! The time came when I was

Spirit-filled, but it didn't happen at the altar. It did not happen during a mighty revival service. In fact, the Holy Spirit visited this little girl while I was on my knees alone in my bedroom. No one prayed over me. There was no great fanfare, just the simplicity of His presence and the peace of knowing that He saw me.

Here is what I learned: When our eyes are so focused on the gifts, we forget that the Holy Spirit is the giver of those gifts. He is a person, and speaking in tongues is simply the result of a spiritual connection to the best friend you could ever have. When you seek Him, you might come to realize, like I did, that it's not about what gift you do or do not function in. Rather, it's about the person of the Holy Spirit who has the power to give us an encounter.

Cassette tapes have long been replaced by audio downloads, and in the same way, it's time for us as a church to expand our perspective on speaking in tongues and the gifts. It's time for us to stop pursuing the gifts and to grab hold of the giver of those gifts! When we learn to pursue relationship, we will walk in the abundance of the gifts and the anointing.

So, seek Him! Seek His hand on your life! Seek His voice in your heart! Seek to know Him, and when you seek Him, you will find the gifts!

Is it possible to be Spirit-filled and not speak in tongues? Listen to this episode on Craig and my podcast, *Next Gen Prophets*, on the Charisma Podcast Network, and decide for yourself.

I pray that we can lead you into your own encounter with the Holy Spirit; I promise, He is not withholding Himself from you. Rather, He stands with His hands extended to you today, beckoning you, saying, "And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17, NKJV). {eoa}

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