

Why You Need to Pray in Tongues More

Bob Yandian, pastor and excellent Bible teacher, taught me a spiritual lesson I've never forgotten. In one of his powerful teachings, he spoke about bad days and the things that happen through the normal pace of life. He spoke about the full armor of God and how often we head into our work day only half-clothed.

My recall of what he said next has remained with me for at least 15 years. Yandian looked at the audience and said, "If you want to have better days and better outcomes, you need to pray in the Spirit more often. Some of you go far too long without speaking to the Lord in the Spirit."

Paul wrote in Romans 8:26, "Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

The Amplified Version of this verse offers deeper insights: "In the same way the Spirit [comes to us and] helps us in our weakness. We do not know what prayer to offer or how to offer it as we should, but the Spirit Himself [knows our need and at the right time] intercedes on our behalf with sighs and groanings too deep for words."

When we focus on the presence of the Lord, our prayer lives change. An intimacy with the Father produces an exchange that can suitably be called a love language. Dr. Gary Chapman outlines five primary ways to express love in his classic work, *The Five Love Languages*. I suggest our spiritual love language informs and empowers Chapman's five. The Holy Spirit teaches us to speak—and not just talk.

I know my wife's love language, and she knows mine. We know

the love languages of our children and grandchildren. When we have those sweet moments of speaking into each other's lives in the way most meaningful to each one, all else fails to compare. Many of those moments are seared deeply in memory.

The Lord wants the same with us. He already knows our love language and meets all our needs in the ways He chooses. But He also wants us to draw close and tell Him about our day ahead. He wants to hear of our worries and frets. He wants us to tell Him everything and "make [our] requests known" (Phil. 4:6b, MEV). The Passion Translation of this verse gives a glimpse of the true intimacy praying in the Spirit can bring: "Be saturated in prayer throughout each day, offering your faith-filled requests before God with overflowing gratitude. Tell him every detail of your life."

The closer we get, the more our native tongue fails to satisfy our need to love Him with our words—to "worship Him in spiritual songs" (see Eph. 5:19). The Holy Spirit brings us a special love language that magnifies our expression of love and ability to communicate with Him.

The Lord reminded me not long ago of the things I miss when I don't start my day by praying in the Spirit. Here are three of them to encourage your prayer life.

When you don't pray in the Spirit, you miss:

1. Help for your weakness. Instead of a day filled with regrets about what you can't do, pray for strength in the Spirit. Ask God to perfect His power through your weakness, knowing His grace is sufficient (see 2 Cor. 12:9).

2. Intercession for others. We long to pray for other people. The Spirit knows our heart and our desire to pray for those in need. Every morning, different people come to my mind while praying, and I know there is effectual intercession occurring through the Spirit.

3. Intimate worship. When we pray in the Spirit, I believe we worship as the angels do. I sense they gather 'round and join our worship offering. Of course, we worship in our understanding, but there is also a time of worship as we pray that simply cannot be described. "The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you" (Rom. 8:11, MEV) and worships Him.

Paul also wrote this great word in Ephesians 6:18: "Pray in the Spirit always with all kinds of prayer and supplication. To that end be alert with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Paul knew that to have the most power and effect, our prayers would need the Spirit's special touch. He also knew we would need intimate communication with the Father; Spirit-filled prayer makes this possible. In this new year, take time to use your love language—and look forward to better days and better outcomes. {eoa}

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