

What is the purpose of personal tongues?

While the gift of tongues is a sign for the unbelievers our personal tongues has not public value – but it has personal value.

- This is why Paul is saying that when they come together, he would rather speak with his understanding.

...yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.
– 1. Corinthians 14:19

CHARGE YOUR SPIRITUAL BATTERIES

Paul explains that our personal tongues is for our own edification. It is a way to for us to strengthen our “inner-man”.

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.
– 1. Corinthians 14:4

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
– Jude 1:20

WHY IS IT BETTER TO PROPHECY?

- Some might get hung up in Paul saying that he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongue.

I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.
– 1. Corinthians 14:5

- But God does not rank us according to what spiritual gift we operate in, so I don't think this is what Paul is referring to.
 - Paul explains that the reason why “he who prophesies” is greater is because what he does edifies the whole church. When we come together that should be the focus of what we do.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

– 1. Corinthians 12:7

... Let all things be done for edification...

– 1. Corinthians 14:26

For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

– 1. Corinthians 14:31

Before you can edify other you need to edify yourself

- Trying to grasp the sum of what Paul is teaching you see that there is a gift that is for personal edification, and a gift for corporate edification. But in order to be of any “corporate” good, we need to have our own batteries charged.

SPEAKING MYSTERIES

One of the amazing benefits of the private prayer language God has given us is the ability to speak mysteries with God.

For 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.

– 1. Corinthians 14:2

- When we pray in tongues no one understand us except God. So, we are allowing God to pray through us, in a language the enemy does not understand.
- We can also pray for things that lies outside of our own understanding. Things that may involve our future, other people or situations.

Should we speak in tongues in public gatherings?

Some have picked out separate verses to argue that we should not speak in tongues in public gatherings, but that is not what Paul is teaching.

- First of all Paul is specifically saying that when we gather there should be tongues, and also that we should not hinder anyone from speaking in tongues.

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one

interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.

– 1. Corinthians 14:26-28

- What we see is that Paul is talking about using the gift of tongues in addressing the whole congregation.
 - If we are not sure if there is anyone who can interoperate the tongues, we should not stop speaking, but he says that then the person should “... speak to himself and to God ...”
- When people say that Paul is saying that he would “... rather speak five words with my understanding ...” than “... than ten thousand words in a tongue ...”, it is a big distortion of what Paul is saying, and this becomes very clear if you read it in context.

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

– 1. Corinthians 14:18-19

- Also, if we want to understand “the sum” of the Bibles teaching on tongues we should not only ready 1. Corinthians 14, but we should read the Book of Acts and see how the first Christians practiced tongues.