

A Word from Pastor Chuck

C A L V A R Y C H A P E L D I S T I N C T I V E S



STRIKING THE BALANCE—PART 1

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

An important characteristic of Calvary Chapel fellowships is our desire to not divide God’s people over non-essential issues. This is not to say that we do not have strong convictions. When the Bible speaks clearly, we must as well. But on other issues, we try to recognize the scriptural validity of both sides of a debate and avoid excluding or favoring those in one camp over the other.

An example of this kind of inclusiveness is found in our approach to the debatable issue concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We don’t take a typical Pentecostal view, nor do we take a typical Baptist view. The minute you set your position one way or the other, you’ve lost half of your congregation. Why would you want to lose half your congregation? Our desire is to minister to as broad a group of people as possible. The minute we start taking hard-line positions

If people want to speak in tongues, we encourage them to do so in a private devotional setting to assist in communicating their love, their praises, and their prayers to God. We look to 1 Corinthians 14 as our biblical example. We don’t insist that a person speak in tongues as the primary evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We believe that there are other evidences that are more credible than speaking in tongues. As Paul said, *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal”* (1 Corinthians 13:1). We don’t emphasize tongues as the primary manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; we look for love as the fruit of the Spirit. I believe that we can stand on a solid scriptural basis doing that and, at the same time, encourage people to receive the gifts of tongues.

As Paul explained, you may use speaking in tongues for your personal prayer life and for your devotional life, singing unto the Lord. *“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the under-*

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on any of the non-foundational controversial issues, we alienate part of the people. In the essential doctrines of the faith, we must take a firm stand. But in the non-essential areas, we accept that people may have differing views, and we accept these in the spirit of grace. It’s important to recognize that we can agree to disagree and still maintain a spirit of unity and love.

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standing also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” (1 Corinthians 14:14–16). If you’re in a public assembly with no interpreter present, and someone is speaking in tongues, how is a person sitting in the seat of the unlearned going to understand? You might well be praising God, but the other people aren’t edified. We need to do all things decently and in order. In this area, we don’t fit in the Pentecostal category, nor do we fit in the cessationist category that would deny any valid experience of the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit today. ↻

In the next issue, we will continue the topic of striking the balance.
All verses above are quoted from the King James Version.