

# Listening to God

Read [Psalm 46:1-10](#)

## LESSON 3

### HOW GOD HAS SPOKEN

Through the ages, God has used a variety of ways to speak to His people. He apparently talked face-to-face on a daily basis with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, meeting them in the cool of the day ([Genesis 3:8](#)).

[Genesis 3:8 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>8</sup>“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were expelled from the Garden, God turned to other forms of communication with His beloved creation.

There are at least eight ways in which God spoke to His people in Bible times:

1. Direct revelation
2. Dreams
3. Written words
4. Prophets
5. Circumstances
6. Angels
7. Jesus Christ
8. The Holy Spirit

## The Written Word of God

We read in [Exodus 31:18 \(NASB\)](#): “When He had finished speaking with him [Moses] upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.”

God has always placed great value on the written word. In fact, the Hebrew people were among the first people on the earth to have an alphabet and to record documents. The reading of the Torah (first five books of the Old Testament) has been a mainstay in synagogue services through the centuries.

God’s advice was spread throughout the early church by both spoken and written means. The gospel accounts are a written documentation of the life and words of Jesus. Much of the rest of the New Testament was originally written as letters from the apostles to the various groups of believers throughout the Roman Empire.



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Behind the written Word of God is always the inspiration of God. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

### **What the Word Says**

### **What the Word Says to Me**

Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path (Ps. 119:105).

Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17).

The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

## **Words of the Prophets**

We repeatedly find in the Scriptures this phrase: “Thus says the Lord.” Those who spoke these words of God—men and women we call prophets—seemed to have felt they had little choice in the matter. God so overwhelmingly gave them a message that they could do nothing else but speak. Isaiah spoke of it as a burning coal applied to his lips. Jeremiah said that he felt as if he had fire shut up in his bones.

Prophets did far more than foretell future events. In many ways, their words can be considered prophetic from the standpoint that they spelled out what was wrong in the people’s hearts and that without repentance, certain conclusions were inevitable.

To be a prophet means ultimately to speak the truth of God to others. Sometimes, that truth is about trends or future conclusions. At other times, it is very specific truth about a particular circumstance. And at still other times, it is the telling of what God’s Word says.

God continues to speak through proclaimers today—men and women we might call preachers, teachers, evangelists, Bible study leaders, Sunday school teachers, and others, people who proclaim the full story of God’s truth.

We need to be very careful in discerning who is telling us the truth today. Our main source for discerning a true prophet from a false prophet is the written Word of God. We must always ask, “Is this person telling me only part of God’s truth, without giving any of the consequences for not heeding God’s Word?” We also must ask, “Is this person telling me something other than what I can find in the Word of God?” If so, the person isn’t God’s prophet.

Our second means of discernment is evidence. What a prophet says, happens. If a person tells us that God is going to do something, it must come to pass. If it doesn’t, the person is a false prophet.

### **What the Word Says**

### **What the Word Says to Me**

Reflect upon these three “words from the Lord” by God’s prophets:

Thus says the Lord GOD:

“Pound your fists and stamp your feet, and say, ‘Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! For they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence’ ”  
(Ezek. 6:11).

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,  
Because the LORD has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to those who  
are bound;  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the

**Bible Study: THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE**

**Prayer Series: Survey of the Doctrines of Prayer**

**Pastor Eddie Idefonso**

**02-13-15**

LORD,

And the day of vengeance of our God;

To comfort all who mourn,

To console those who mourn in Zion,

To give them beauty for ashes,

The oil of joy for mourning,

The garment of praise for the spirit of  
heaviness;

That they may be called trees of  
righteousness,

The planting of the LORD, that He may be  
glorified (Isa. 61:1–3).





Through the LORD's mercies we are not  
consumed,  
Because His compassions fail not.  
They are new every morning;  
Great is Your faithfulness.  
"The LORD is my portion," says my soul,  
"Therefore I hope in Him!" (Lam. 3:22-24).

Include in your reflection your emotional response to these prophetic words.

## **Conformed to the Truth**

It is not enough that we comprehend the truth. We must be conformed to the truth.

God calls us to present ourselves to Him as if we are a **“living sacrifice.”** In the Old Testament days, God consumed sacrifices with His holy fire as a sign of His presence among the people. In our time, God burns out of us with His holy presence everything that is not like Jesus, and then He causes us to burn and to shine brightly with a zeal for living the life Jesus would live if He was walking in our shoes.

As we read and hear God’s Word, we come face-to-face with ourselves, our deficiencies, our errors, our faults. We say again and again, “I’m not like Jesus. But I want to be like Him.” At these times we know that God is truly speaking to us because God always calls us to become more and more like Jesus.

How do you do this? You say to the Father, “Help me to change. Help me to be more like Jesus.” God has promised that He will show you how to be like Jesus, and He will help you become more like Him.

Every time you realize that your life doesn’t line up perfectly with the truth of God’s Word, you have a choice to make—to accept or reject God’s way. When you accept God’s way and openly say to the Lord, “I’m not like that, but I want to be like that,” He begins to do something inside you. You may find that your tastes are changing. You may become uncomfortable in situations in which you used to feel comfortable. You may have new desires for things that are good, healthful, and wholesome. That’s the transforming power of God at work!



## Communicate the Truth

Finally, God desires that we communicate His truth to others. God does not give us His truth so that we might hoard it, but that we might share it. He does not impart blessings to us so that we might store them up, but that we might give them away to others and grow in our capacity to receive even more from God. He does not love us so that we might merely bask in His love, but that we might extend His love to others and, in so doing, draw them closer to the Lord. Jesus' commandment was this: **“Go therefore and make disciples”** ([Matthew 28:19](#)).

You communicate your relationship with God whether you intend to do so or not. Your actions, your demeanor, and your spontaneous words reflect your heart. But there is something beyond **“simply being”** that the Lord calls you to do. He desires that you actively and intentionally share what you know about God with others.

Why? So that others might come to know Him, and so that those who know Him might continue to grow in Him. But there is yet another reason—and that is so that you might have more brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, and that your relationship with these brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus might be deeper and richer.

You see, God wants us to have a loving relationship with Him as our heavenly Father, and He desires that we have loving relationships with others so that our lives might be more joyful, meaningful, and fulfilling. We aren't called to a relationship with God in isolation. Rather, He desires that we become a family of God here on this earth—with a sense of belonging, identity, unconditional love, and great value as individuals.

When we openly and freely share the truth of God with others, we build community. We forge eternal relationships. We connect with people who also are seeking to know God's truth and be conformed to it. And in that, we find strength and comfort and mutual assistance. We become **“fitted together”** with others in a bond that brings us individually and collectively toward greater wholeness.



be with Him. The more you are with Him, the more you are going to want to become like Him. The more you become like Him, the greater your witness in the world.

The greater your witness, the more others will begin to hear His voice and the more enriching and loving your relationships with others will become.

God speaks to you for your benefit and for His delight in establishing a relationship with you.

Consider these questions:

- *What new insights have you gained from this lesson about God's desire to communicate with you?*

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- *How do you feel today about God's desire to communicate with you?*

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- *What in your background may affect that feeling?*

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- *What are you challenged to do?*

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