

Listening to God

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

LESSON 4

THE PRIMARY WAYS GOD SPEAKS TODAY

In the last lesson, we explored eight ways in which God has spoken to men and women through the ages. We must never limit God in the methods that He uses to speak to us, but from my experience and observation, I believe there are three main ways that God speaks to us today:

1. **His Word**
2. **His Holy Spirit**
3. **Other believers in Christ Jesus**

The person who desires to hear from God, and who wants to put himself or herself into the best position to hear from God, will follow one of these three methods. In these ways God routinely, daily, and consistently speaks to all people who seek Him.

Listening to God Through the Bible

It is no accident that the Bible is so routinely called the Word of God. The Bible is God's foremost way today of communicating with us.

In the Bible, we have the complete revelation of God. He doesn't need to add anything else to this book. Through the ages, the revelation of God was an unfolding truth by God about Himself. In Jesus, that truth was fulfilled. As Jesus said of Himself, He didn't come to change anything about the law or the commandments; He came to show us by His life's example how to fully live out God's plan in our lives. (See [Matt. 5:17](#))

God's Word is for all people because it speaks to the basic human condition. The Bible addresses every emotion, human relationship dynamic, problem of the heart, aspect of the psyche, temptation or desire, heartache or joy, or issue of faith, love, or hope.

In the Old Testament, we have God's laws and commands, complete with examples of how God works in relationship to His own law and what happens when humankind disobeys the law (or obeys it). We have songs and poetry that tell us about the nature of God and the nature of people, and the nature of the relationship God desires with humankind. We have promises of God's presence.

In the New Testament, we see how God gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, to live out God's plan before us—becoming our role model, mentor, older brother and, ultimately, our Savior and the door through which we enter eternal life. We see what happened to the

first disciples and apostles as they received the promised Holy Spirit and began to live the very life of Christ Jesus in their society. We find teachings that show us how the Holy Spirit enables us to live a life that is fully pleasing to God the Father, a life that goes beyond mere law because it is based on the spirit of God's law, not the letter of the law.

The Bible covers it all! What a precious gift to us! Whenever we face difficulties, experience heartaches, or have questions, we should go first to the Scriptures. There God will speak to us directly, personally, intimately, and effectively.

How does this work in a practical way? First, you pray and seek God's guidance about a decision. You should ask boldly for God to speak to you through His Word and give you His wisdom. (See [James 1:5-6](#).)

In response to your prayer, the Lord often will direct your mind to a particular passage of Scripture that you have encountered in your regular daily reading of the Bible. He will bring to your remembrance His truth on the matter.

If you do not hear from God about precisely where to turn in the Scriptures, you should begin to read the words of Jesus. (I suggest you read a Bible that has the words of Jesus printed in red ink; that makes it very easy to see what Jesus had to say.) As you read, you may become intrigued with a particular line of thought, or you may be drawn to a particular word or phrase. You may want to use a concordance at that point to discover other places in God's Word where that word or phrase is used. Follow the lead that you sense.

In many cases, I have found that we may not go directly to the passage that holds God's truth for us in a given circumstance; rather, as we continue to read and study, God leads us step-by-step to the information He wants us to see with new spiritual insight.

Eventually, you will come to an incident in Scripture, a passage, or even a single verse that is directly related to your concern, question, or problem. It may deal with your specific experience in a way that seems uncanny or very familiar to you. Or the passage may deal in principle. You may find the key concepts that speak to your need.

As you pray and read, trust the Holy Spirit to quicken your spirit to His truth. You may feel this as a warmth inside, or you may feel a great sense of absoluteness about a particular verse. Sometimes the words on the page of your Bible may seem to stand out to you as if they were written in bold headlines. Sometimes you may not be able to get away from a particular passage. It comes repeatedly to your mind, and you can't seem to shake it from memory.

Do not limit your search of God's Word, of course, to times of crisis or need. Read His Word daily. It is as you read daily that God directs you, challenges you, warns you, comforts you, and assures you. Daily reading is like preventive spiritual health care. How much better it is to divert a problem or to address a matter before it truly becomes an issue. In your daily reading, God refines you bit by bit, slowly and yet always

transforming your thoughts and responses into those of Jesus. As you read the Word daily, you store God’s Word in your memory, almost as if you are making daily deposits in a bank, so that the Holy Spirit can bring to your remembrance God’s Word immediately and precisely.

Don’t fail to read God’s Word daily. Go to it as if it is eternal nourishment for your eternal soul.

When you face a difficult situation or a problem for which you have no answer, go to God’s Word first. Seek out His counsel. Jesus said, “**Seek, and you will find**” ([Matt. 7:7](#)).

- *In your faith walk, have you experienced times when the Word of God seemed to speak to you personally—perhaps a verse in the Bible seemed to have been written with only you in mind?*

- *How did you feel when God spoke to you in this way?*

What the Word Says

What the Word Says to Me

Be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success ([Josh. 1:7-8](#)).

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting ([James 1:5-6](#)).
