

# 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 the Holy Spirit

As we walk in the Spirit daily, surrendered to His power, we have the right and privilege to expect anything we need to hear from God. The Holy Spirit living within us and speaking to us ought to be the natural lifestyle of believers. We claim His presence, direction, and guidance by faith.

One of the lines of the Lord's Prayer points toward our daily reliance on the Holy Spirit: **"Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."** I believe that is how the Holy Spirit guides us in an ongoing way each day. He speaks in our hearts a no to everything that would bring us harm, and thus, He delivers us from evil and away from temptation. He also speaks in our hearts a yes to everything that will bring us blessing.

In the Old Testament when men such as King David inquired of the Lord, the question was nearly always put to the Lord in such a way that the answer was yes or no. I believe this is the foremost way that the Holy Spirit speaks to us hour by hour as we walk through our particular set of circumstances. We can never ask too many times of the Holy Spirit, **"Should I do this—yes or no?"** or **"Should I say this—yes or no?"** We will sense in our spirits His word of reply to us. Generally, it will be a sense of enthusiasm and eager desire marked with great joy and freedom, or it will be a sense of foreboding, danger, caution, or need for silence. I find that it is much easier to receive the direction of the Holy Spirit by asking for yes-or-no counsel than to say to Him in general terms, "What do You want me to do?"

Very specifically, the Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit guides us and gives us God’s advice in these ways:

*The Holy Spirit reminds us of what God has said to us and done for us in the past (including God’s word to us in the Scriptures and through the life of Jesus).* Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would testify of Him—in other words, remind His disciples of all that Jesus said and did, and of its appropriateness for their lives. (See [John 15:26–27](#).) Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you continually about what Jesus would be, say, and do if He was walking in your shoes, through your circumstances, today.

*The Holy Spirit gives us words to say.* After describing for His disciples what would happen at the “**end of the age,**” Jesus encouraged His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in moments of crisis or questioning. We, too, should breathe a prayer for the Holy Spirit to give us the words when we face difficult moments in which we don’t know what to say. We can trust God to provide words for us just as surely as we can trust God to meet our other needs. At times, the Holy Spirit may advise us to remain silent.

*The Holy Spirit gives us direction about where to go.* The apostle Paul said that the Holy Spirit spoke to him when he was on his way to Asia, forbidding him to go there. (See [Acts 16:6–7](#).) We can trust the Holy Spirit to point us in the right direction.

*The Holy Spirit guides our prayer.* Paul taught the Romans, “**He [the Spirit] makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God**” ([Rom. 8:27](#)). When we don’t know how to pray, we should ask the Holy Spirit to pray for us and through us to the Father. That’s the sure way we can know that we are always praying in God’s will.

As you pray about a particular matter, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer. Wait in silence for Him to bring to your mind and heart various aspects of a situation or of a person’s need. You may be surprised at the things the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray—things you had never thought about before.

**What the Word says**

[Luke 12:11-12 \(NASB\)](#)

**<sup>11</sup> "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."**

**What the Word says to me**

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**Acts 16:6 (NASB)**

**<sup>6</sup> They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;**

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**Romans 8:26 (NASB)**

**<sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;**

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