

# 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 Word through Other Believers

God uses people to speak to you. Some may be total strangers. Others may be dear friends or members of your immediate family. He uses pastors and teachers and Bible study group leaders.

I have been privileged to receive the wise counsel of many people of faith whom I admire and respect. Several years ago a very close pastor friend of mind shared the following with me: "I felt impressed to call together several men to whom I opened my heart fully and shared the deepest wounds and hurts of my life. The men heard me with love and compassion. I then said to them, "Whatever you tell me to do, I will do." They gave me counsel that was truly God's wisdom, and as they prayed for me, God broke into some of the secret areas of my heart and healed me in ways I hadn't even known were possible. I experienced God's love for me in a personal way, and with such great warmth and approval, that I have never been the same since. God used those men to speak truth to me and to be God's voice to me."

God not only gives you comfort and counsel through the words of other believers, but at times, He uses people to give you words of admonition. You need to be open to these words, also. Sometimes others can see far more clearly the mistakes you are about to make or have made.

As you open yourself up to hear God's word from other people, you must make certain that:

- The word given to you is in total alignment with God's written Word, the Bible. God doesn't forget what He has already said. He doesn't contradict Himself. If a word is from God, it will be consistent with what God has already revealed through Scripture and the life of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The person has no ulterior personal motive. When you are confused, in pain, or in need, you are much more subject to manipulation than you might be at other times. Make certain that the person who gives you counsel or advice doesn't want something from you and isn't trying to manipulate you for his or her purposes. Make certain, also, that the person turns all praise and thanksgiving toward the Lord Jesus and not toward himself or herself.
- The word does not include something that might harm another person. God doesn't cause one of His children to be blessed or to prosper at the expense of another. He doesn't move a person into a situation or circumstance that will cause another person pain, loss, or suffering. If someone advises you to take action that will damage or destroy another person—reputation, property, relationships, spiritual growth—don't take that advice. It is not godly counsel.
- The word is for your ultimate and eternal good. God does not deal in short-term gains with long-term disasters. He always speaks to you in a way that prepares you for eternity with Him. If someone gives you advice that seems to bring a great immediate blessing, but that carries the risk of long-range detriment, refuse the advice. God's word is always consistent over time.

We must recognize that virtually all of us first came to believe in Christ Jesus because somebody told us about Jesus. Few people have a direct revelation of Christ Jesus or encounter Him first and solely in the Bible. Most of us hear the Bible preached in a way that woos us to Jesus as the Christ. Or we hear a person's testimony. The highest and best thing any of us can do is tell others about what Jesus Christ did for them on the cross.

