**Bible Study: THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE Prayer Series: Survey of the Doctrines of Prayer Pastor Eddie Ildefonso** 

05-01-15 (19)

## Listening to God

Read <u>Psalm 46:1-10</u>

## **LESSON 5 HOW GOD GETS OUR ATTENTION**

When we walk in the Spirit, our spiritual antennae alert to God, we hear what He is saying to us as a natural part of our spiritual walk. This is the Christian life, living keenly responsive to the voice of God in whatever fashion He may choose to speak to us. We can have our attention focused on a person, a chore, or an idea, but at the same time, we are so tuned to God's voice that if He speaks to us, we immediately turn our attention to Him.

Unfortunately, there are times when we choose to do things our own way. As a result, we are headed in a direction that will bring us to disaster or disappointment. God is speaking, but we aren't listening. We aren't tuned in to Him.

In these times, God often uses unusual means to get our attention. Prominent among them, from my experience and understanding of God's Word, are these four means:

- 1. A restless spirit
- 2. An unsolicited word from another person
- 3. Unusual circumstances—both bad and good
- 4. Unanswered prayers

## Circumstances

Circumstances can set us up to open our hearts to God and turn our attention fully toward Him.

I have seen numerous examples in my ministry of illness, accidents, bankruptcies, failures, divorces, disappointments, and other times of trouble bringing people to their knees and to a total reliance on Christ—sometimes for the first time in their lives, sometimes for a renewal of surrender and commitment. These situations are not necessarily caused by God. They may not be the result of our own error or sin. But they are circumstances in which we question life and seek answers, and very often, that search for meaning turns us toward our heavenly Father and gives Him a greater opportunity to speak to us.

When trouble strikes, your first response should never be, "Why, God?" or "Why me, God?" There is no good answer to such questions in most cases. Your first response should be, "What do You have to say to me in the midst of this, God?" He will speak. Unusual circumstances can also be in the form of blessings. This is certainly the type of attention–getting method I enjoy most! The apostle Paul described this form of attention–getting in <u>Romans 2:4</u>: "Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" The blessings may be spiritual or financial, or they may involve your home or vocation. God just seems to pile on the blessings. If you are not careful, you may assume that you have a right to use these blessings in any way you desire. Instead, you need to ask the Lord why He is blessing you so abundantly. He may very well have a special plan for you to use these blessings for the furtherance of His kingdom, and if you fail to be sensitive to God's plan, you can miss an even greater blessing ahead.

• Has an unusual set of circumstances ever led you to seek God in a new way? What happened when you opened your ears to hear God's voice?

