

# Listening to God

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

## 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**

## Unanswered Prayer

When all of our prayers seem to be answered, we may become complacent and just cruise through life without paying close attention to what God desires to say to us. Then we encounter a particularly urgent need, and the heavens seem to be made of brass. The silence is uncomfortable to us. We feel a growing desperation to hear from God. At that time, God has our full attention, to be sure!

There are legitimate reasons in the Scriptures why some requests are not granted:

- A person may be asking for the wrong reasons ([James 4:3](#)).
- A person may be in disobedience or rebellion ([1 John 3:22](#)).
- A person may be asking for something that is outside the will of God ([1 John 5:14](#)).
- A person may be in a state of unforgiveness with another person ([Matt. 6:14-15](#)).

Peter taught that husbands are to dwell with their wives **“with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered”** ([1 Peter 3:7](#)).

At times, God refuses to answer our prayers because He knows that if He answers them, we will stray farther off base. For example, an answered prayer may cause us to respond with personal pride and error in thinking that our prayers alone led to a miracle, a healing, a blessing, or a person's salvation.

We need to keep in mind, of course, that what we call an unanswered prayer may be a "no," a "not now," or a "not until" answer. Each is a valid answer, although it may not be the answer we desire. The Lord denied Paul's request for the removal of his "thorn" of the flesh, and He gave instead a "grace sufficient" to help Paul face and overcome his problem. (See [2 Cor. 12:7-9](#).) Not all prayer is answered with a yes. Sometimes no is the best answer for our situation.

- *Have you ever experienced a time when heaven seemed to be silent? In hindsight, was there a reason?*

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- *Was the answer perhaps no? How did you feel when this happened?*

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- *What did you do? What was the outcome?*

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**What does the Word say**

**What does the Word say to me**

**Job 30:20**

**Read 2 Corinthians 12:2-10. What role does suffering play in our lives?**

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