

God Speaks Through the Bible

DAY 4

God speaks to you by the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways. Perhaps the questions people ask most about God's speaking are:

- How does God speak to me?
- How can I know when God is speaking?
- How can God be more real and personal to me?

God speaks uniquely to individuals, and He does it in any way He pleases. As you walk in an intimate love relationship with God, you will come to recognize His voice. You will grow to know when God is communicating with you.

Jesus compared His relationship with His followers to a shepherd's relationship with his sheep: "The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. . . . The sheep listen to his voice. . . . His sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:2-4). In this way, when God speaks to you, you will recognize His voice and follow Him.

God speaks through a variety of means. Today God primarily speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church. These four ways are difficult to separate. God uses prayer and the Bible together. Often circumstances and the church, or other believers, will help confirm what God is saying to you. Frequently, God uses circumstances and the church to help you know His timing. We will talk more about that in the next unit. Today let's look at ways God speaks through the Bible. Tomorrow we will look at God's speaking to us through prayer.

1 Mark the following statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- ___ a. God speaks to individuals in unique ways.
- ___ b. God reveals His greatest truths through dreams and visions.
- ___ c. When rightly related to God, His people will hear and recognize His voice.
- ___ d. God frequently speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible and prayer.

God is sovereign. He can do whatever He chooses. With Scripture as our guide, we know God speaks in unique ways to individuals. His people will hear and recognize His voice. Today He primarily speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church. Only statement b is false. The others are true.

The Spirit of Truth

The Bible is God's Word. It describes God's complete revelation of Himself to humanity. God speaks to you through the Bible. As you have already learned, however, a person cannot understand spiritual truth unless the Spirit of God reveals it. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17). The following diagram should help you visualize how the Holy Spirit speaks to you through God's Word.

WHEN THE SPIRIT DIRECTS MY ATTENTION TO A TRUTH, I WRITE IT DOWN, MEDITATE ON IT, AND ADJUST MY LIFE TO IT. I ALERT MYSELF TO WATCH FOR WAYS GOD MAY BE THAT WAY IN MY LIFE DURING THE DAY.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE BIBLE



This is a diagram of an encounter with God. When the Holy Spirit reveals a spiritual truth from God’s Word, He is personally applying it to your life. That is an encounter with God. This is the sequence:

1. You read God’s Word—the Bible.
2. The Spirit of truth takes God’s Word and reveals truth.
3. You adjust your life to God’s truth.
4. You obey God.
5. God works in and through you to accomplish His purposes.

2 Using the description and the diagram, summarize the way God speaks through the Bible. _____

3 Write the following key words in the correct sequence:

adjust, reveals, obey, read.

1. I _____ God’s Word—the Bible.
2. The Spirit of truth takes God’s Word and _____ truth.
3. I _____ my life to God’s truth.
4. I _____ God.
5. God works in and through me to accomplish His purposes.

1 Corinthians 2:14-15

“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things.”

The Spirit uses God’s Word (the sword of the Spirit; see Eph. 6:17) to reveal God and His purposes. The Spirit uses God’s Word to instruct us in the ways of God. We cannot understand God’s truths on our own. Unaided by the Spirit of God, it will appear to be foolishness to us. Aided by the Spirit, we can understand all things (see 1 Cor. 2:14-15).

4 God has probably used a particular Scripture verse to speak to you at some time during this course. Look back through units 1–5 and find one passage of Scripture God seems to have called to your attention.
 a. What is the reference? _____

b. What does that verse reveal to you about God, His purposes, or His ways?

Meditate on this verse and pray. Ask God to continue speaking to you about the truth in this passage. Keep in mind He is more interested in what you become than in what you do.

c. What does God want to do or be in and through your life? _____

d. What adjustments would you have to make to align your life with this truth—

- in your personal life? _____
- in your family life? _____
- in your church life? _____
- in your work life? _____

e. Write a prayer in the margin of response to God about this truth and its application to your life.

f. Since you first came to understand this truth, has God done anything in your life that required you to apply the truth or share it with someone else?

Yes No If so, what? _____

Understanding spiritual truth does not lead you *to* an encounter with God; it *is* the encounter with God. You cannot understand God's purposes and ways unless the Spirit of God teaches you. If God has revealed spiritual truth to you through this passage of Scripture, you have encountered God Himself working in you!

Responding to Truth

I always approach the Scriptures with excited anticipation. The Spirit of God knows the mind of God. Because He knows what God wants to do in my life, He begins to open my understanding about God, His purposes, and His ways. I take that work seriously. Therefore, when God reveals truth to me in His Word, I write down the passage of Scripture. Then I meditate on the passage, immersing myself in its meaning. I adjust my life to the truth and thus to God. I agree with God and take any actions necessary to allow God to work in the way He has revealed. Finally, I watch for ways God may use that truth in my life during the day.

You may want to follow the same process as God reveals truth to you. When God leads you to a fresh understanding of Himself or His ways through Scripture, respond to His revelation in these ways.

1. Write down the verse or verses in a spiritual journal or diary.
2. Meditate on the verse.
3. Study the verse to immerse yourself in its meaning. What is God revealing about Himself, His purposes, or His ways?
4. Identify adjustments you need to make in your personal life, your family, your church, and your work so God will work this way with you.
5. Write a prayer response to God.
6. Make the necessary adjustments to God.
7. Watch to see how God may use that truth in your life during the day.



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Here is an example of the way God may use His Word to speak to you. Suppose you are reading Psalm 37. Although you have read this psalm many times before, you come to verse 21 and read, "The wicked borrow and do not repay." You are drawn back to that verse. You read it again. Then you remember a debt you have failed to repay. You realize this Scripture applies to you. You immediately take action and repay your debt.

The Holy Spirit has just spoken to you through that verse. You have encountered truth. Now you understand that those who borrow and do not repay are sinning in God's sight. The Holy Spirit has called your attention to a specific instance in which this verse applies to you. He is convicting you of sin. He is the only One who can do that. God has spoken to you by the working of the Holy Spirit and through His Word. God wants you to have no hindrances to a love relationship with Him in your life.

5 If you were in this situation, what should you do next? Following the sequence in the diagram on page 104, what do you do after the Holy Spirit reveals an understanding of truth to you? _____

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God speaks uniquely to individuals, and He does it in any way He pleases.

When God speaks to me, I will recognize His voice and follow Him.

I cannot understand spiritual truth unless the Spirit of God reveals it.

God is more interested in what I become than in what I do.

Once God has spoken to you through His Word, your response is crucial. You must adjust your life to the truth. In this case the adjustment is this:

- You must *agree* with the truth: those who borrow and do not repay are morally wicked in God's sight.
- You must *agree* that the truth applies to you in the particular instance God has brought to your memory. This is confession of sin. You *agree* with God about your sin.

In this way you have adjusted your understanding about borrowing and repaying to agree with God's will in this matter. To agree with God, you must change your understanding to comply with His. This requires an adjustment. Is that all you must do? No!

Agreeing with God in confession is not enough. Until you repay the debt, you have not repented of your sinful ways. This is where obedience comes in. You obey God's will by repaying the debt and making any necessary amends. After you respond, you are free to experience a more complete relationship with God. Always connect a revealed truth with your understanding of God and your relationship with Him.

Review today's lesson. Pray and ask God to identify one or more statements or Scriptures He wants you to understand, learn, or practice. Underline them. Then respond to the following.

What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

Reword the statement or Scripture into a prayer of response to God.

What does God want you to do in response to today's study?






