

## WEDNESDAY— How can we hear God speaking?

**Big Point:** People have a tendency to listen only to what they want to hear.

Soccer star Keith Downing shared the following story about his Uncle Dick... Apparently Uncle Dick noticed that every time he ate pork chitlins (his favorite food), his foot pained him immensely that evening. His family physician confirmed his suspicion of pork-induced gout. When Uncle Dick returned home from the doctor's office, his wife asked him how the appointment had gone. Uncle Dick plopped off his shoes and replied, "The doctor said I'm going to have gout about three times a week." The lesson: people have a tendency to listen only to what they want to hear.

-from [www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com), "Hearing God When He Speaks"

Yesterday we looked at God speaking through His Word, Wisdom, and Authority. Today, we will see how God speaks through Personal Experience, the Holy Spirit, and Godly Counsel.

### READ...What does the Bible say?

**1 Samuel 3:3-4, 9-10 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>3</sup>The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. <sup>4</sup>Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" <sup>9</sup>So Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening,'" So Samuel went back to bed. <sup>10</sup>And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

**James 4:8 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>8</sup>Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

### THINK...Find the answers

Read 1 Samuel 3:3-4. Where was Samuel when he heard God speaking to him? How did his location help Samuel hear God?

In 1 Samuel 3:9-10, Eli gave the confused Samuel advice on what to do when he heard God's voice again: in order to hear God, he must give God permission to speak. How did this help Samuel hear God?

According to James 4:8, what hinders our ability to hear God?

### LIVE...What will you do now?

There are lots of passages in the Bible where God admonishes his people to listen to him. Why is it so important to God that we listen to Him? God wants us to hear his voice—it's the only way we'll receive all the blessings He wants to give us.

Describe some experiences in your life when you have been blessed as a result of listening to God's leadings.

When it comes to hearing God, proximity is important. We can't expect to hear from God if we don't remain close to Him. That's why things like attending church and doing life with other Christians in a Life Group are important. List two or three Christ-followers you can turn to for godly counsel.

We have looked at six ways that God speaks into our lives. Why it is important for us to consider all of the ways when contemplating a decision versus just relying on one or two areas of input?

## **PRAY... What do you want me to know and do?**

Today, thank God for His grace in wanting to bless you. Ask Him to help you slow down and remain close to Him so you can listen and be guided by Him in your *life*.

### **DAILY BIBLE READING COMMENTARY: Proverbs 20-21**

**20:1**—In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul instructs believers to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. When we overindulge in alcohol, we are unable to live by the Spirit because we are under the influence of alcohol. Drinking alcohol is a liberty. However, every believer must determine whether or not to indulge in this liberty.

**20:2**—This verse is a parallel to Proverbs 19:12. Both verses discuss what happens to subjects who do not live in obedience to the king's rules.

**20:6**—This verse is a parallel to Proverbs 18:24.

**20:12**—Hearing God speak into our lives is a blessing.

**20:13**—"If you love sleep" doesn't mean that it is wrong to get enough rest; rather it describes a person who is lazy and doesn't get up and work.

**20:15**—"wise words" This theme is repeated numerous times in Proverbs.

**20:22**—Are you secretly hoping that someone will "get theirs" for wronging you? There are numerous verses in both the Old and New Testament that remind us that God will deal with those who treat us unjustly.

**20:24**—We are often confused by the events around us. Some things we will never understand until later when we look back and see how God was working. This proverb counsels us not to worry if we don't understand everything as it happens.

**21:2**—This verse should remind you of Psalm 139:23—Ben talked about this verse in his message on Samuel.

**21:6**—Perhaps someone should have mentioned this verse to Ponzi scheme mastermind Bernie Madoff...

**21:12**—God knows what's happening behind closed doors even though your manicured front lawn and shiny cars fool your neighbors and friends.

**21:13**—This verse reflects Jesus' illustration in Matthew 25:35-45.

**21:20**—Saving for the future isn't unbiblical—in fact, God admonishes us to prepare for future financial obligations so that we won't end up incurring unnecessary debt. Those who are unable to control their spending will end up broke.