

**NOVEMBER 6/7**





**CAN  
YOU  
HEAR ME  
NOW?**

**GOD**

**IS TRYING  
TO TELL YOU  
SOMETHING  
PART 1**

**LUKE 10: 38-42 NIV**

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301 S. ALFRED STREET | ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314 | REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY, SENIOR PASTOR

**A SERMON BY REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY**

#GODSTRYING2TELLUSOMETHING | #PHJW | #ASBCSERMONSERIES



**VILLAGE**  
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MOVING FROM CROWD TO COMMUNITY

**Sunday,** November 6, 2021

**Preacher:** Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley

**Sermon:** Can You Hear Me Now? God Is Trying to Tell You Something - Part I

**CURRICULUM  
GUIDE**





## Sermon Summary

When God calls your name twice, God is definitely trying to get your attention. In the biblical text, God calls the names of seven people twice: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Simon, Paul and Martha. Why might God need to double up on our names to get our attention? Pastor Wesley notes, even though God is always speaking to us and always broadcasting the divine will for our lives; sometimes, we do not pay attention. This sermon notes four things that can block us from listening to God and to obeying God's will. The four things are arrogance, busyness, desire, and sin. When we stop paying attention to the word and the will of the Lord, God will use various methods to tap us on the shoulder:

1. God will use blessings to open our eyes to the goodness of the Lord, reminding us the Lord is near.
2. God will block adverse occurrences, keeping us safe from harm and danger.
3. God will permit us to be broken, because in the breaking God gets our attention to reset and heal us.

God wants us to pay attention and listen to the divine promptings in our lives. But, if we will not, God will get our attention one way or another, even by calling our names twice.

## Key Points

1. God loves us so much. He cares about every aspect of our lives. He is always speaking to us; yet, we struggle to listen to God.
2. We must be aware that arrogance, busyness, desire, and sin can block our ability to hear God's voice and to discern God's will for our lives.
3. God uses blessing, blocking and breaking to get our attention.
4. Jesus cares about us individually so completely that he stands at the door and continually knocks, hoping each and every soul will open the door and welcome him in.
5. Through grace and loving correction, God will use every opportunity to get our attention.
6. Here is the good news: God loves us all so much that God will 'shout his will over our lives'.

Pastor Wesley added a hallelujah to this sermon. He reminds us that even if God has to break us, the breaking is not the bottom line. After God broke Jacob's hip, God still had amazing plans for Jacob's life and ministry. In our breaking God helps us put our lives back together, for His glory and praise. Hallelujah indeed!



# Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Did you love movies growing up? If so, what are some of your favorite movies about faith and friendship?
2. In his description of “The Color Purple”, Pastor Wesley mentions the ‘power of faith and friendship’ as tools to overcome some of life’s most challenging circumstances. Please share a story of faith and/or friendship that aided you in overcoming a challenge.
3. Did your elders ever call you by your name, twice? Or, by all of your given names? What did that mean in your family?
4. In the opening prayer, Pastor Wesley says God has kept, blessed and spoken to us. Not everyone has the same experience of God. Has God ever kept, blessed or spoken to you? If so, please pick one of the above and share how God interacted with you.





# Into The Bible Questions:

Pastor Wesley reminds us that hospitality in 1st century Palestine was vitally important. A family's reputation rested, in part, on how they treated guests. As the text reads, "Martha was distracted by all of the preparations that had to be made." When Martha asks Jesus for help, Jesus tries to tell her that busyness can interrupt her capacity to hear and obey God's will. The contrast between Mary and Martha is not that one is working hard and the other is hardly working, but that one is single-mindedly focused on Jesus and the other is pulled in many directions away from Jesus. Like Martha, if we wish to discern God's will for our lives, we cannot be pulled in many directions. Instead, we must learn to be still, like Mary, sitting, undistracted, in the presence of the Lord.

1. What pulls you in many directions, keeping you from a quiet time with the Lord? When you look back on being pulled away, what did you learn from. That experience? What would you do differently today?
2. Have you, like Martha, ever been annoyed by someone who seems to be able to set things aside and focus on Christ?
3. What does the text about Mary and Martha teach us about hearing God's word?





## Life Application Questions:

1. The sermon notes that God uses the acts of blessing, blocking and breaking to get people's attention. How has God used these tools to get your attention in the past? How did it grow your faith?
2. Pastor Wesley says God is always broadcasting his will for our lives. How does God communicate with you? How do you communicate with God?
3. Because God does not force holiness, we have free will, given to us by God. This gives us the opportunity to choose whether or not we will communicate with the Lord.
  - a. Are you glad God has given us free will?
  - b. Do you wish there had been a "different design"?
  - c. In your opinion, what are the benefits and the hindrances of free will?
4. Pastor quoted a clergy colleague who said, "Whatever you neglect in prayer, you assume you can handle by yourself." Are there areas in your life you wish you had prayed about earlier? How will this knowledge change your current prayer life, or prayer list?





## "Can I Push It?"

1. When Pastor Wesley lists the obstacles to hearing and obeying God's will, he seems to suggest that people will get really quiet when the talk is about our sin.
  - a. What happens if we refuse to talk about our sins?
  - b. Are there any blessings in talking about our sins? If so, what are they?
  - c. How might we talk about our past sins as an example of how God has refined our walk, or of how God has changed our hearts?
2. Which of the four highlighted obstacles (arrogance, busyness, desire, sin/unrepentant disobedience) presents the biggest challenge for you in hearing and obeying God's word? Why do you think that is?
3. If these four do not represent your struggle, what blocks your communication with God? *Remember the old saying, tell the truth and shame the devil.*



## Activity:

While the biblical text ends with Jesus' chastisement of Martha, we do not hear Martha's or Mary's response. Using your holy imagination, write out a scene that includes responses from Martha and Mary to Jesus, focusing on how Martha might repent of her distractedness and how Mary might receive Jesus' confirmation of her choice.

## Spirit Work:

In our current culture, being busy is correlated with being productive and successful. Pastor even says, 'we live in a world that has confused quiet time with wasted time.' Set your watch, phone or egg timer for ten minutes and just sit with your eyes closed breathing deeply, in and out. When you inhale, say: "I breathe in God's love". When you exhale say: "I breathe out worry". Try this once a day during your prayer time. Ask yourself how you feel after just 10 minutes of deep breathing.



### **Additional Questions for Married Couples:**

1. This sermon invites us to seek God's will for our lives by listening to what God is trying to tell us. In your relationship with your partner, how well do you listen to one another? What techniques might you try to listen better to your partner's heart?
2. Busyness is one of the things Pastor says can block our access to hearing God's will. What would it look like if you and your partner chose a consistent time in your daily or weekly schedule to not be busy, to be intentionally still and enjoy the company of one another in God's presence? What do you think would arise from such a practice?
3. Thinking about the ear pod story in the sermon, have you ever gotten "too far" from your partner's heart to really hear them? What did you do once you realized this "spiritual spatial" distance was having an impact?

### **Additional Questions for Young Adults:**

1. In your daily schedule, when do you make time to avoid busyness, and to rest with God?
2. What does it look like to have a daily practice of rest?
3. How do you transition into your work day, and out of your work day? Which of your habits are most effective at keeping you in tune with God?

### Additional Questions for Parents:

1. The enemy can make our gifts our idols, causing us to believe that it is our power, not God's grace, that enables us to do specific things well. How do we model for our children a continual, humble seeking of God in the use of gifts and talents for the Kingdom?
2. If we sin in one part of our lives, according to this sermon, there are consequences for other parts of our lives. How would you explain this concept to your children?

### Additional Questions for Women:

1. In this story, Martha is consumed by "woman's work", whereas her sister takes up the position of a disciple. The disciple role is not a role generally open to women in 1st century Palestine. However, Jesus commends Mary for sitting at his feet. Have you ever been in a position where you were engaged in work considered more appropriate for a man? If so, are you comfortable sharing what happened to you, and what you may have learned about God's will for your life?
2. The sermon notes that Jesus says, 'Mary has chosen what is better'. What did Mary choose that was better? What might this suggest for your walk with the Savior?
3. If Martha's gift was hospitality, she lost her joy as she compared her gift with Mary's gift of devotion. Has comparison ever robbed you of your joy in your gifts?
4. How do we avoid the snare of competition and comparison, which robs us of the joy God has given us in our gifts? (1 Corinthians 12)



### Additional Questions for Men:

1. Mary and Marth have a brother, Lazarus. Where do you think he was during this scene?
2. How might Lazarus have responded to Mary's position at Jesus' feet? Have you ever been in a position to respond to a woman who has taken up what is considered a man's role?
3. Pastor reminds us that God is always trying to tell us something. In a culture that does not often honor listening, are there unique opportunities for godly men to encourage one another to quiet themselves and listen for the promptings of God? If you are comfortable, and you have previously helped another brother listen for God, please share your experience.

### **This Week's Sermon Biblical References**

1. When Your Name Is Called Twice, by God!
  - Abraham: Genesis 22:11-13
  - Jacob: Genesis 46:1-4
  - Moses: Exodus 3:1-10
  - Samuel: I Samuel 3:1-10
  - Martha: Luke 10:38-42
  - Simon: Luke 22:31-32
  - Paul/Saul Acts 9:4
2. Jacob and God wrestle.
  - Genesis 32:22-31

## FURTHER RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

### THE WORD DISTRACTED IN LUKE 10:40

Martha's problem is not that she is a poor host or too busy. Martha's problem is illuminated by the word Jesus uses in verse 40. Martha is distracted. The word translated "distracted" in verse 40, is *periespato*. This word means being pulled or dragged in different directions. Martha's problem is that she is focused on too many things and she loses the joy of the one thing she hopes to do well, to create a hospitable, generous welcome for Jesus and the disciples.

### BREATH PRAYERS

1. The practice of breathing in certain words and breathing out others is called, breath prayers. For more information, please click, [Breath Prayers](#)