



Teaching Letter 9

## God Will Answer You

*“Call to me and I will answer you . . . .” (Jeremiah 33:3, RSV).*

**T**oday’s verse is well-known and often quoted. Usually it is used for encouragement to someone who needs re-assurance in a troubling situation. David wrote before Jeremiah: “In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me” (Psalm 86:7, *NIV*). It is a great word of encouragement. I’ve used it many times, and I’ve quoted it to God more than once. Why quote it to God? Three reasons I will mention.

One, to pray God’s Word is to stand on very solid ground. It is praying God’s will and those prayers get answered. I don’t have to wonder whether I am in agreement with God when I pray His Word. Remember, He is watching over His Word to perform it. (See Jeremiah 1:12, *RSV*.)

**T**wo, speaking God’s Word is helping to increase my faith in God and His Word. As we’ve discussed before, “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17, *NKJV*). When I speak His Word, I am also hearing it.

Three, I have quoted this verse to God when it seemed God was not answering me. I will admit I have called to God in desperate situations and never knew what He said or did in reply—until much, much later—sometimes years. I have wondered whether Jesus, dying on the cross, received a reply from His Father when he cried, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Maybe the Father’s reply was not immediate, but I believe He did answer His Son. Though Jesus *felt* forsaken, He was not truly forsaken. Jesus felt what we sometimes feel. Feelings, however, are not truth. God’s Word is truth, and His Word says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).” It also says, “Call to me and I will answer you.”

**A**nother question is, “Do we really want God to answer us?” That may sound like a ridiculous question. Of course we want God to answer us. It is possible, however, in some instances, to close our hearts to hearing what God might want to say to us. It is subtle, and if we knew the end result, we most likely would not do it. Scripture warns against hardening our hearts toward God’s Word or voice. The Psalmist spoke of this: “. . . Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart . . . .” (Psalm 95:7, 8, *KJV*).

Hardening our hearts toward God has several effects, one of which is to eventually shut down our ability to hear His voice. One way we harden our hearts is by rejecting His voice when He speaks something we really do not want to hear. Maybe God said “no” to something we really wanted. We didn’t like that answer, so we got upset at God. Deep in our hearts we may have said something like, “God occasionally says things I don’t like, so I won’t listen to *those* answers.”

**I** have heard people say they were afraid God might call them to be a missionary in Africa. Or He might ask them to give all their money to the poor, as Jesus told one young rich man. Maybe we all have thought these things. So, instead of wholeheartedly opening our hearts to hear *whatever* our loving heavenly Father might say, we fall into this trap of our enemy Satan. Satan knows, if we try to be selective in our hearing, we will in effect decrease our ability to hear God at other times as well. This happens in the spirit, and we are unaware of what we have done.

Occasionally, because God is merciful, He will break through to us. Nothing can stop Him. We are the ones hindered. However, He doesn’t want us to keep a hard heart. He says get rid of it.

Until we do, He will allow the hindrance so we will seek Him and find out what is wrong. The next step is repentance. Hardening our heart is a sin, and the first step to dealing with any sin is repentance.

**G**od does answer us—every time we call to Him. If we say something different, we are speaking contrary to Scripture. “Call to me and I will answer you.” I choose to believe God’s Word. So if I am having difficulty hearing Him, I will seek Him to know what may be blocking or hindering my hearing.

There are times when God delays an answer. If He delays, it is for a good purpose. Maybe our request requires God to work in an individual’s heart. You may be praying for someone’s salvation. This is God’s will; however, it may take a while for God to break through to that person. When God works with people, He works so as to win them and to bring them to choose Him. This often takes time.

**I**’m reminded of another type of delay in the story of Lazarus in the New Testament in John 11. John wrote that Jesus loved Lazarus. He also loved Mary and Martha, Lazarus’ sisters. Jesus spent time in their home from time to time. One day Jesus was away and received a message that Lazarus was sick. Mary and Martha asked Jesus to come. They were “calling” to Jesus for His help. Jesus, however, remained where He was, seemingly ignoring their call.

Even His disciples wondered why Jesus made no move to go to Lazarus. Then, after two more days, Jesus headed to Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It took another day to get there. When they arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days. Both Mary and Martha said to Jesus in their grief: “If You had been here, our brother would not have died.” In other words, “Jesus, You did not come when we called.”

**I**n essence, Jesus’ answer was—“I am here now, and I am never late.” He told them He is the resurrection and the life. In their grief, they almost missed what He was saying. Sometimes our grief or disappointment or fear or doubt can be speaking

so loudly, we can hardly hear Jesus. He got their attention, and then raised Lazarus from the dead.

Is there anything making so much noise in your life that you are missing what Jesus is saying to you? You have called to Him. He either has answered or is answering. You can be assured of that. He will either speak to you or show you, sooner or later, the answer.

**W**e read in Psalm 145:18: “The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth” (*NIV*). If you have any fear, grief, disappointment, doubt or hardness of heart, bring that to Jesus first. Then let Him speak *whatever* He may want to say to you. **SH**

GOD’S WORD FOR TODAY

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