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## Listen...God is speaking By Elise L. Moore

Many people believe that prayer means talking to God. We tell Him our problems, and we thank Him for our blessings. But instead of thinking of prayer as a monologue from us to God, what if we consider it a dialogue in which we honestly praise God, affirming what He is and what He does, and then listen for His thoughts to us?

God is talking to *us*, twenty-four hours a day. His messages to each of us - to you and to me - are unique, just right for our individual needs.

You may be wondering, "How do I know if I'm hearing God or if it's just something I'm imagining?" I believe that deep down we each know when God is speaking to us. That's because every individual has spiritual sense, or spiritual intuition. Everyone is able to hear what God is saying. One way to double-check whether a thought comes from God is to ask, Is the message moral? Does it bless others and not just me?

Since God is talking to us all the time, we need to start listening all the time. Not just in church or when reading the Bible or during quiet moments. Spiritual listening is as much an attitude as an activity. We always need to have an ear tuned to God - even in the middle of a busy day. That is praying without ceasing (see I Thess. 5:17). This kind of prayer includes turning our thought God-ward, listening, obeying, and returning thanks to God.

Hearing should be accompanied by doing. Obedience to God's guidance is essential. Think of it: this guidance is the wisdom of the all-knowing, all-loving, all-wise God. We can't do better than that. We're blessed as we cultivate obedience.

It's also important to *acknowledge* that God is guiding and blessing us, by thanking Him. Gratitude for His goodness keeps us tuned God-ward. God does not play favorites. His inspiration, guidance, and blessings are broadcast in equal abundance to everyone.

But what if someone is not listening to God's thoughts or not being obedient to the messages that divine Love is providing? Does God abandon that person? No. I've learned that God is infinitely good, and that He gives His thoughts freely to all those around, thoughts which help even those who might not be listening.

During a vacation from college, I was driving down a one-way street on a Saturday afternoon. Cars were parked solidly on both sides. As I was driving along, the thought came to me to stop. There was no apparent reason to do so, but over the years I've learned to identify when God is speaking to me and to obey without questioning. So, I began to stop, right in the middle of the block. In less time than it takes to tell, a young boy darted out between the parked cars and dashed in front of me. My foot was already on the brake. I jammed it to the floor. The car stopped instantly, and I missed that child by not more than three inches.

As I sat there thanking God over and over for warning me, it dawned on me that God must have also spoken to that boy. God must have directed him not to run carelessly into the street, but he hadn't listened. So God told me to stop. The message was not for my safety - it was to protect and help another. I realized how important it is not to ignore God's messages just because we don't see how they apply to us.

Then there was the time when one of my friends, a teenager, had an old truck. One day he went to a large junkyard, looking for a truck part. As he was leaving, he suddenly got the thought to run. His first response was, "No way! What if someone sees me?" But in that moment he remembered discussing in Sunday School that God speaks to us twenty-four hours a day and that we should listen and obey. So he ran. Not fifteen seconds later, near the spot where he had been walking, a truck blew up. It took that whole part of the yard with it. The force of the explosion was so great it knocked him flat on the ground. Parts of the truck and pieces of metal were falling all around him. One large part fell right beside his head, but not one piece hit him.

Less than a month later, another boy from the same Sunday School class was riding his motorcycle to work on a curvy country road when the thought came to him to pull off to the side of the road, turn off his bike, and look into the ravine. His first reaction was, "What? I'll be late for work!" Then he remembered his friend's experience and immediately obeyed.

There, at the bottom, he saw a car upside down and thought he heard a voice calling for help. He slid down the embankment and found a woman trapped inside the car. Immediately, he drove to town to get help. The woman credited him with saving her life, and the city held a special ceremony, awarding him a medal for heroism. The woman told him she'd been driving too fast, missed the turn, and landed in the ravine. She'd been calling for help for almost two hours, but the passing motorists couldn't hear or see her.

Messages from God don't come only in certain places or at certain times. And they aren't always so dramatic as the ones in these examples. But they always indicate God's love. If our thoughts are still and our hearts receptive - whether we are in a junkyard or driving to work - we will be ready to listen and to obey.