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Unemployed? Think freedom

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

"You're fired ... but I want you to do the sales training as scheduled for the next two days."

The company president awakened me at 2 a.m. to deliver this news. Too stunned to speak or even think, I listened in silence as he rambled on for a few minutes and then hung up on me.

Maybe I didn't answer because my throat closed in fear. The thumping in my ears was panic beating an SOS. I had a mortgage, bills, and responsibilities. What was I going to do?

I was the national sales manager for a small company and had taken it to new heights. We'd just hired two regional managers and were poised for expansion. Never mind that I'd begun to wonder if the company was skating on the edge of illegal activities. Never mind that I'd seriously considered quitting but couldn't see how I'd get paid the tens of thousands of dollars owed me in commissions.

Then the heat of anger replaced cold fear. I called one of the regional sales managers for support. What a shock to learn he knew this was coming. The president had picked a personal friend to replace me.

Stunned, I sat on the edge of the bed in that lonely hotel room. How could I sleep? In less than five hours, I was to lead an intensive weekend training for sales associates, training the new regional managers to give the seminars as we went. The president was going to be there. Should I even show up?

My thoughts raced faster than heartbeats. I knew I had to get a grip. I reached out to God for help.

Whenever I pray, I've learned to stop talking and listen for God's voice. I remember learning as a child the story from the Bible of a young boy named Samuel. He heard the voice of God but didn't know that it was God. So he went to his parental figure, Eli, who finally told him the voice that he heard could be God speaking to him. When Samuel heard the voice again, Samuel said, "Speak; for thy servant heareth" (I Sam. 3:10). Samuel grew up to be a successful man and a great prophet. I always felt it was because Samuel did more listening than talking to God.

That night, I got still. I stopped worrying. I stopped speculating. I stopped being angry or hurt or afraid. I just listened, expecting to hear an answer from divine Mind.

The divine Mind is always awake. Mind sees more and knows more than is humanly possible. Mind communicates and is heard in mental quietness.

In the stillness came two thoughts. (1) I should do the seminars because it was the right thing to do. No one else was qualified to lead them. (2) God was in control, and this was my freedom.

Well, I couldn't quite see how being fired was freedom. But I'd listened and this was the answer. I was going to accept it. As amazing as it sounds, within an hour I was able to put the entire situation in God's hands and go to sleep.

I did lead the seminars and trained the regional managers. I smiled my way onto the plane home. Once there, I read my employment contract. The only way I could be paid what was owed me, was if I completed my duties once notified of termination. I was paid and freed.

Since then, I've often equated job changes with freedom. A person is free to investigate other employers. Free to change fields or locations. Free to develop additional talents. Free to learn new skills or pursue different interests. Free to listen for Mind's guidance and inspiration.

Not that jobs need to be enslaving. Mental freedom can take place as much on the job as when we're looking for employment.

Perhaps freedom comes through acknowledging God as our Employer. God is the supplier of good and has enough places for everyone to be productive. There is freedom in knowing that each of us is always wanted, always useful to God. And there is a place for every individual in the company of divine Mind.

I made two career changes after being let go. Being fired freed me to consider options I never would have thought feasible. It led me to being self-employed in a fun and rewarding job that I've enjoyed for almost 20 years.

The founder of this newspaper said, "God made man free" ("Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," page 227). This use of man includes male and female. Whatever a person's job status, each one can find employment and freedom by listening to God.