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- *Humans choose to hear God*
- *God's presence and activity in times of challenge and uncertainty*
- *The power of prayer to open others*
- *Prayer does not call God into action*

God speaks to each of you. What you hear is really what you choose to hear. The voice of God is constantly present. It is somewhat like a radio station that broadcasts—either your radio is turned on or not, but the broadcasts continue. Your lives are not unlike that radio, for you can choose individually to listen, to hear what God says, or you may choose not to be receptive. Hearing God, hearing your guides, is not a unique gift. It is available, as you know, to everyone. Each of you can listen. Each of you has something to hear. What's more, you have something to learn from that which you hear.

It is interesting to reflect upon the shared experiences of this group, for it is not unlike that experienced by other similar groups. There are times when you are filled with a sense of purpose and joy. There are other times when you may be occupied by concerns—concerns involving yourselves, concerns involving others whom you know. You are experiencing a period in this cycle or set of patterns that is characterized by transition, concerns of health, concerns regarding relationships, concerns that occupy your consciousness at many different levels. It is a time of transition, but these times are really to be welcomed and not feared. They are times that hold great promise, for out of the turmoil, out of the uncertainty, out of the fear come a sense of direction, a sense of purpose, a conviction that carries you forward. Such times of transition do not necessarily bring immediate gratification or great joy, but they do afford each of you an opportunity to sense with great certainty the presence of God regardless of the difficulties encountered.

We have said before and it bears repeating that in times of celebration and joy, one's awareness of God in a true sense is often diminished. You may thank God for what it is that creates the joy, but you actually seek out and find God at times of difficulty and uncertainty. Certainly you can choose not to look for God, but the uncertainty brings you to the point where you can decide to seek evidence of God in your own lives. Such times are present now. There are matters that concern you about individuals, local situations, national issues, international issues. It is easy to first respond with a sense of being detached from God, to ask simply, "Where is God in all of this? Why are these things as they are?" Such questions can be asked in frustration, in desperation, in anger, but they can also be asked as an act of faith.

Such is it when you ask sincerely, "Where is God in all of this?" When you ask in such a manner, you will be led to a clearer vision and you will see God is here as God always is. Getting to that point where you are filled with conviction that God is here

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is often long in time and difficult in its challenge. But the ultimate recognition is so wondrously fulfilling—the sense of God’s presence which is only recognized when you are brought to a place in your lives where you ask, “Where is God in all of this?” You are then much closer in your sense of God’s presence than when things are going well and you are primarily giving thanks. We do not want to discourage you from giving thanks, for the soul must also rejoice. The soul cannot just seek. It is good to acknowledge that God has a hand in what you experience that is positive. But your sense of identity with God’s presence is so much more keenly felt as a result of asking the question of where God is.

These cycles of thanksgiving, of supplication, of outcry, of worry are all natural cycles of the human condition, and they are indeed to be relished for their importance and their potential as times of transition—transition of condition, transition of faith, transition of vision. It is the time of transition that moves you forward in your faith. Transition is essential for your own growth—the growth of faith, the growth of spirit. A life is essentially without direction unless there is transition, for transition implies the potential for change.

There is no one who looks at one’s life honestly and completely and says, “There is no room for change. All is as it should be. I’m doing everything necessary.” An honest look will reveal that there are lots of reasons why things could be better. There is need for more peace. There is need for more patience. There is need for more love, for endurance, for physical and spiritual strength. There is need for more compassion. There is need for more joy. There is need for more giving. There is need for more receiving. Such are the grounds of the presence of transitions in your lives.

Crossroads they are. When you come to a crossroads a decision always has to be made: which way does one go? Asking those questions means that you evaluate your lives on numerous levels and then adjustments are made and the journey continues, strengthened by the questions asked and the insights received. Welcome all of those transitions.

By welcoming the opportunity, you are not welcoming the pain of another. You are only welcoming the potential for insight and vision that such pain may provide for many. There is something to be gained in suffering, both by the person in pain and the person who is consumed by the desire to relieve the pain and suffering of another. Both benefit, but both benefit only if they choose to benefit. The person who is ill can be filled with anger and refuse to recognize that there are opportunities which belong to that pain. The person who prays on behalf of another can be consumed by grief for what the other goes through and not choose to seek growth in the process. The choice then is really your own.

Each of you chooses to hear what God has to say. Each of you chooses to take what you know, what you experience or what another experiences, and turn it into

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something that benefits all. The choice is yours. The inspiration, the benefit from God is already there.

When you pray on behalf of another, you are not actually asking God to intervene as if God were standing on the side waiting for an invitation. You are really praying that another may be open or that you may be open to the help, to the healing, to the strengthening that is already present. God's presence is always positive. Every possible alternative that you can imagine to a dilemma that is in any way positive belongs to the realm of God. There is nothing negative to the realm. God does not represent pain and suffering. God does not represent anger or division. On the contrary, God's influence is only positive, but God does not force that influence upon you. It is available to you. It is present constantly. All that is needed is your choice.

As you pray for the healing of another emotionally, physically, you are really praying for the openness of another to healing, the nature of that healing taking many different forms. One can be healed in the spirit and yet lose the body. One may receive physical healing if that is what is best, but healing will take place, there is no question. By praying for another, you are in effect opening another by the act of your prayer. Even when not recognized by someone else, the openness, the receptivity is achieved, for no prayer goes unanswered. God will not deny openness when it is openness that is requested, and that is only positive. Nothing negative can be drawn from the experience of being open to God. You can therefore be assured that what you pray for is indeed brought to life and to light, without exception.

If prayers are motivated out of selfishness, then there is no positive component. God's response can only be positive. Pray out of generosity, pray out of compassion, pray out of love...those prayers are invariably answered. You may or may not recognize the answer immediately, but you can have every confidence that those prayers are responded to. You are not calling God into action. You are merely opening to be receptive, for God's action is already there.

Each of you has a great power, greater than you think, for you have the power to open others, you have the power to open yourselves to God's presence. But you also have the power to prevent yourselves and others from being open through negative thoughts. It is an awesome power beyond armies, governments. It is the power to accept or the power to reject God's presence in your lives and in the lives of others. When you are at a crossroads, therefore, exercise your power to be open. Use the power of prayer to open others. You can enable many as well as yourselves by your own prayers. It is a power to be used wisely and lovingly, but it is very real and very present. As you grow to recognize this ability that all humans have more consistently, you will find greater evidence in your own awareness of God's presence, and that increased awareness will give you yet more confidence to exercise that power in the future for yourselves and for others.

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You are the repository for your soul. You are also responsible for your soul, and you are in many ways responsible for the souls of others through your exercise of prayer and in bringing strength into the actions of your daily living. You are blessed in your knowledge, you are blessed in your strength, you continue to be blessed in your insight. We, your guides, are blessed by your awareness of us, and we are blessed as you pray for our growth and strength. Rely on us to reflect God's light upon your daily lives. We are with you constantly. We are here to be acknowledged by you, to be welcomed and embraced by you. In so doing, you are acknowledging and embracing the presence of God's brilliance within your lives. Be glad that you have this insight. Be glad for the opportunity that you have to serve, to strengthen, to encourage, reinforce. They are gifts from God to all, but you are aware of receiving them, and to you belongs the opportunity of exercising that which you have received and living your lives with that great knowledge.

We bless you with God's life, light, love and enduring presence.

Amen.