



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Listening to God

**Guest(s):** Marilyn Hontz

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Announcer: Today on Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: Well, hello everyone. I'm Roger Marsh and you are listening to Family Talk. This and every one of our daily radio programs are produced by the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm joined now by our host, Psychologist and bestselling author, Dr. James Dobson. and Doctor, I'm eager for our listeners to hear today's program. You know, every person at one point or another asks that tough question. Well, what is God's will for my life? When we are faced with major or tough decisions. We desperately want to hear the audible voice of God tell us what we should do, don't we?

Dr. Dobson: You know, I've heard that question often too, and the thing is that God is speaking, but are we listening?

Roger Marsh: That's right.

Dr. Dobson: It was King David in the scriptures who was called a man after God's own heart, and that's the type of spirit that we're talking about today. We're going to hear from a very dear friend of mine, Mrs. Marilyn Hontz.

Roger Marsh: That's right, Doctor, Marilyn is a well-known Christian speaker and author. And I believe she still travels to various retreats and workshops and conferences all over the country. Marilyn holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Biblical Literature from Azusa Pacific University and has written two books, Shame Lifter and Listening to God, which will be our basis for today's conversation. Now, going back to that example that you brought up about King David, it fits so well with what we're talking about today, Doctor, David truly chased after God's heart by listening intently to what God had to say and we can have that same closeness and that's what I hope our listeners will learn from this presentation.

Dr. Dobson: Well, speaking to our listeners, no matter where you are today, and this is a very memorable message that we're about to hear, because listening is not something that most of us come by naturally.

Roger Marsh: That's true. That's true.

Dr. Dobson: We have to be intentional about listening to the Lord's voice. In Psalms it says, "Be still and know that I am God." The Lord knows that we'd need reminders to do this, and being still is sometimes the hardest part.

Roger Marsh: Yep. Just like my grandson who has such a hard time not fidgeting, and I struggle with my being still during my quiet times too, doctor. Well, let's listen now to the wise words of Mrs. Marilyn Hontz on today's edition of Family Talk.

Marilyn Hontz: Let me just start off with saying that basically there are four ways that God speaks to us today because, you know what, there's some people who say God doesn't speak today. That was in times past. Let me tell you, God speaks today and his main way of speaking is through his word. And I wish I had time because I could share a story after story of how maybe God, and I'm sure many of you have had this happen where God's given you a verse in the morning and maybe it was for you or maybe it was for someone else, and a person is called later that day and you've been able to share that verse. And it was just what they needed. God speaks through his word. It says that the word of God is powerful and living and sharper than a two-edged sword and it cuts way to the moral of our bones.

Marilyn Hontz: It can do what no other book can do. And that is God's word to us. So he speaks through his word. He also speaks through his Holy Spirit. Another way God speaks to us through godly counsel of others, and the fourth way is through our circumstances. But I want to tell you that the last two ways that God speaks to us through godly counsel of others and through circumstances, those are always my final two that I go to because number one, I want to go to the word of God for counsel from God. Number two on there I said, what is listening prayer? And it's just basically a time after I've prayed, after I've spent that time praying in the morning, where I just get quiet before the Lord and I just listen. And you know what? This is sometimes confusing for people because they say, "Well, I've tried it and I don't hear anything."

Marilyn Hontz: And you know what? That's okay. That happens to me a lot of times too, but there's other times where the Lord will just speak a verse to my heart or just something of his love to me or whatever it is, but it's just the time of being quiet and listening. This is the time when the Holy spirit speaks to our heart and mind, so that he can share what's on his heart and what's on his mind. And you know, it's kind of like it's very flowing [inaudible 00:04:22] from the Holy spirit that he gives. And prayer is two way conversation. I want you to catch that prayer is two way. And for me, prayer for me was one way. And you know what that was okay. That was me just telling the Lord and giving the Lord requests. But all that time he was wanting to talk back with me too.

Marilyn Hontz: And I didn't even realize that. So to keep that in mind, it's two way conversation. Probably the best illustration I have of that is to say this, Abby this week had an ear infection. So we got her into the doctor and they're saying, we said, "Okay, these are the symptoms. Her ear hurts really bad and these are swollen over

here and her throat hurts, dah, dah, dah." And then if we would have turned and walked out of that examining room and said, "Good, now we told the doctor all of our needs" and walked out without the doctor giving us his diagnosis and without getting the medicine, what good would that have done?

Marilyn Hontz: And I found that that's so often what I was doing with the Lord. I was running into that room so to speak and saying to the Lord, "Now Lord, these are my needs or these are the needs of other people," and then running right out the door when I was done instead of waiting to see what God wanted to say about those needs, what was his diagnosis? What did he want to tell me? So listening prayers, just taking time at the end of praying for you to listen. But I want to tell you too that listening happens throughout your day. It just doesn't have to happen when you're in prayer time.

Marilyn Hontz: Yesterday I had the funniest thing and I probably shouldn't even share it, it's so silly, but I was out filling up watering cans to water the flowers and all of a sudden I looked up at the sky and it was just beautiful. It's just beautiful blue. We've had so many gorgeous days. I can't hardly stand it that every day I look out the window and it's so beautiful. This is like California. It's just gorgeous. And I just got caught up in what I call a God moment. You know what I'm talking about? Those times when all of a sudden you're not even thinking about God and then he just pops into your mind and you are just so filled with joy.

Marilyn Hontz: And I thought, "This is so glorious, Lord. Looking at those green trees and that blue sky," I even turned myself upside down. I'm going like this. In fact, later I thought, "Boy, if any neighbors drove by, they probably thought I was nuts," but I was looking at creation upside down and saying, "Why it's so beautiful that way?" and I'm saying, "Oh God, I wish I could just think about you all the time, all through my day." But you know what, I can't and I don't, I don't want you to think I do. But you know what, the Lord just popped into my mind. He said, "Marilyn, when you come live with me. You'll have a constant knowing of me, and sensing of me all the time. There'll never be a time where your thoughts aren't dwelling on me." And I thought "Wow, God, that's going to be so great."

Marilyn Hontz: I mean, I was caught up in one of those God moments. God speaks all through our day. It's just that a lot of times we're not taking the time or we're so busy in our thought life that we don't give him a chance to speak to us. There are some scriptures I'm listening. Just real quickly, [inaudible 00:07:16] get those to you. What is Psalm 46, 10 you probably have known this since many of you were children. "Be still and know that I am God." And even if you don't hear him speaking, that doesn't matter. You're knowing that he's God and you're like, "What a precious time." Psalm 32:8, I want you to listen to how many times the word you, Y-O-U, is used.

Marilyn Hontz: Psalm 32:8 says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you and watch over you." That's pretty personal. That is full of guidance. Do you know how much God wants to guide us? How much he wants to share his heart with us? Five yous in there. And it's another one that's very

similar to that is Isaiah 48, 17 it says, "I am the Lord, your God, who teaches you what is best," best, not even just what's good best, "for you. Who directs you in the way you should go." I tell you, that's a God who wants to be in our lives. Who wants to share with us what to do and the way you should go, whether it's going to the bank or to the store first. That's Isaiah 48:17.

Marilyn Hontz: Amos 4:13 blows me away because that verse says that God revealed his thoughts to man. Can you believe that? God literally reveals his thoughts to man? Luke 10:39 it's just a wonderful word picture here. Where it says, "Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to what he said," I want to do that. I want to be like Mary. I want to sit at Jesus' feet listening to what he said. John 10:27 says, "My sheep," and who are his sheep? We are the Lord's sheep. He said, "My sheep, listen to my voice." Am I listening? "And I know them and they follow me." John 10:27. And then I close with, there's more verses, but another verse I have here is Proverbs 8:34, "Blessed it is the man who listens to me watching daily at my doors waiting at my doorway."

Marilyn Hontz: And so often I've shared that little illustration of Maggie, our dog, who at our old house, we've moved now, but at our old house knew that at 20 minutes to 3:00 would start waiting at that front door because she knew the school bus was bringing home Mandy and she longed for Mandy to walk in that front door. She would prop herself there and I'd say, "Maggie, who told you it was 20 minutes to 3:00 and that you should be there waiting?" She also goes and waits at the back door for my husband at 5:30 because she knows that's when he comes in. She waits watching head pointed right at the door. Nothing distracts her. What a vivid picture for me.

Marilyn Hontz: Am I doing that with the Lord? Am I waiting for him? Am I watching daily at the door for him? Anyway, there's many, many more scriptures I'm listening. Why does God want to speak to us? I think the main reason is he wants to be intimate with us. He wants a relationship with us. He doesn't want us to just say, "Oh yeah, there's a God and he's out there." He wants to have a wonderful personal relationship with each one of us.

Marilyn Hontz: And do you know what? For as many of you who have received Jesus as your Lord and savior, that means the Holy Spirit has already tugged at your heart and spoken to you and you responded to the voice of the Lord. So, many of you have already been listening to the Lord and some of you may have not even realized that. But another reason is he just wants us to know him better. And another reason would be that we would know God's agenda. If any of you have read, Experiencing God really stresses this. You know, it's so easy to know what we want to do, but really to know God's agenda. And many times this will just stop and ask the Lord, "Lord, what do you want me to do today? What is your agenda?" It's easy for me to have my own agenda. Just say, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

Marilyn Hontz: Another reason that he can tell specific things to help comfort us, guide us, encourage us. And that I think one of the, another main reason that he wants us

to listen to Him is because when we start listening to Him, we realize how much he loves us. He has got a passionate love for his children that most of us don't even realize. I don't fully realize it, but he wants us to feel treasured and loved by him. And the only way he can do that is during those quiet times.

Marilyn Hontz: How to listen. Number one thing, there's no set formula. If you're going to come out of here and think, "Oh, this is what I have to do and then I'm going to hear God." Mm-mm (negative). Because he works with us individually. But there are some things that do help in this, in how to listen. But to realize that, first of all, we have to learn to know the father's voice. It's not a skill that we inherit. It must be developed. You think about little Samuel when he heard the Lord speaking to him, he didn't know it was the Lord. He went to Eli. He said, "Yes, you called." You know, and after several times there, and finally Samuel found out that was God speaking to him. But, you know, once he knew it was the Lord, he never had to go to Eli again. He knew, but it took time. It took practice.

Marilyn Hontz: So that's another thing is listening takes practice. There are some things too that we must be sure to do and we're going to listen, and that before we listen, we ask for a clean heart because you know what? Sin muffles God's voice. And if we have something in our lives, we're not going to hear the Lord speaking to us. Another thing how to listen is if you do hear a prompting from the Lord, it may be just to write a note to someone. The Lord's not going to give you any more to do until you have followed through with that first step of obedience. He's not going to give you more guidance until you do what you're supposed to be doing that first time. And then another way to listen is to ask questions like, is there anything in my life, Lord, that you want me to adjust to?

Marilyn Hontz: Is there anyone you want me to pray for, Lord? Those kinds of questions. Ask him those kinds of things. He'll bring a person maybe to your mind. And even, it's so neat, if you've asked him to remind you of people to pray for, today this happened too, I told someone I'd pray for them and this morning when I went through just my regular time of praying for some people, I forgot to pray for him. Here I am then later on putting my contact lenses in, and the Lord said, "Jimmy Johnson." Boom. Just like that. Now, I hadn't remembered at all, but the Holy Spirit is so faithful to remind us to pray. So just keep those listening ears up.

Marilyn Hontz: Discerning the voices real quickly. There's like, boy, I really got to run here. There's like three voices. There's God's voice. There's ourself, there's our enemy. And God's voice is always going to be gentle and pure and honest.

Marilyn Hontz: God's voice will never contradict scripture. I've had people come to me and say, "Now Marilyn, I'm married, but I think it's okay for me to go and be with this guy over here that God's calling me to leave this marriage." I'm going, "Nope, hold on. Stop. No, that is not God's voice." I think a voice that's hard to distinguish sometimes it's our self voice. But you know a way of really checking on that is it's the motive selfish? Is it a wrong motive? Is there desire to ask for information like, Lord, what am I going to die? I am not talking about listening to

God for that kind of stuff. And you remember those magic eight balls, at least when I was a kid they're black things and you shake them up and you ask it a question and it answers yes, or no, or whatever.

Marilyn Hontz: I didn't have one of those but I used to see those. That's not the way God wants us to use guidance. And you know, we're not supposed to be asking questions like that. The other voice that we'll hear is Satan's voice. And his voice is always loud and clamoring and agitating. He can be very subtle, but his voice does not bring peace and he will use even scripture out of context with you. That's why it's so important to know scripture, because the Lord Jesus will never do anything out of. He will never contradict his holiness nor scripture.

Marilyn Hontz: I'll share one about Holly, who was a senior in high school at that time. And I was in another part of the house and the Lord just put on my heart, "Go talk to Holly." I said, "Wait, everything's fine with me and Holly. I mean, there's no problem." "Go talk to Holly." And to make a long story short, I went to her bedroom. I said, "Holly, how are you doing?" "Fine, mom." And I said to the Lord, "That's what she would say to me." And I said, "No, Holly, how are you doing?" "Mom, I am fine." And I said, "No, no, really, really. How are you?" "Now, mom, what do you think is the problem?" And before I'd gone into the bedroom, I had said to the Lord, "Now if I go bug Holly with this question about how she is, she's going to want to know why I'm in there."

Marilyn Hontz: And I said, "Lord, you're prompting me to go in there. Now what's the deal?" And the Lord gave me one word. It made no sense to me. So after she said to me, "Okay, mom, what do you think, what's wrong?" I said that one word, instant tears. Holly started sobbing, and I think for the next hour just so much came out, Paul heard what was going on, came out in the hallway and prayed for us. As Holly released so much stuff from her, that have been done to her in third grade by some friends. I know it's very insignificant, but what we saw half an hour that is Holly was totally free from some bondage that was holding her captive of really letting loose for the Lord.

Marilyn Hontz: It was so incredible. I had no clue. I had no clue. But as a parent, God was helping me to parent. Mandy, a year and a half ago, struggled with intense back pain because of a severed nerve. And she came to me one day after nine months of pain, critical pain, acute pain, and said, "Mom, do you think maybe there's sin in my life and that's why I'm in this pain?" And I wanted to say, "Oh no, that's not it. That's not at all." But I said to her, "Mandy, you go back and you ask God that question and you listen to the Lord." Because you see early on you start teaching your children to listen to God on their own.

Marilyn Hontz: She went back the rest of that afternoon, came to me that night and she said, "You know what, mom? I listened to the Lord." And she said, "This is what I believe he told me, he said to me, 'Mandy, I could heal you at any moment. But right now I'm choosing not to because I want to teach you something.'" And she said, "And mom, I don't want to miss what God wants to teach me." That was powerful. Because when you're a parent and you're watching a child in pain,

you want to be able to give them answers and all that and what you know from the word of God.

Marilyn Hontz: But when they get it straight from the heart of Jesus, right to them, it makes such a difference. It helped Mandy through, and God did heal that situation a little later on. But to train that children to listen to the Lord, even if they're real tender, like Samuel's age. I called it the last story that I've shared so many times. It's the story of Becca on the playground, I work out there at Harrington School and she was a little girl that just didn't have the right clothes to be on the playground during the winter time. She had spring clothes on, clothes that didn't zip and all kinds of stuff. No boots, no hat, no mitten, nothing. And so I said to Paul one day, I said, "We've got to do something for this little girl, and Penny's would give us 25% off.

Marilyn Hontz: So I said, "Okay, I'm going to Penny's." And it was okay for me to go. I was already going out the back door and the Lord stopped me and said, "Marilyn, did you pray about this? I said, "But Lord, this is your will. You want us to help clothe other people." "Go back." I went back to the couch in the family room, knelt down and I said, "Lord, is there someplace else you want me to go other than Penny?" And the Lord said, "Yes, outpost." I said, "Outpost? I can't go there." I said, "That's more expensive. That's a very, very nice store. I love that store, but I can't go there." And the Lord said, "No, call Outpost. I want you to go there." Well to make a long story short. I finally called Outpost, I didn't know what in the world I was doing.

Marilyn Hontz: I was embarrassed calling them. And I know they don't have any sales. And I said, "You don't have any sales going right now. Do you?" "No." And I said, "See, Lord, told you." And I said, "And you don't have any last year model clothes, right?" "No." "See, Lord, there's nothing there." And so I'm ready to, you know, hang up. And this person says to me, "Well, what do you need?" I said, "Well, I need a size 10 coat for a little girl." "Well, how soon can you get down here?" And I said, "Well, about 30 minutes." And she said, "Great, come on down." And she says, "What does this little person need?" And I said, "Well, there's no snow pants, there's no mittens. No coat." And I said, "Now, we are paying for this." She says, "Oh no, you're not." She said, "The Police Department just called and said they didn't have a name to give us for someone who needed clothes."

Marilyn Hontz: And she said, "Every year we try to help out a family," and she said, "This is our person. We want to do this." So I run down there, get all this stuff. And at the very end this lady dropped, the sales clerk drops in a pair of socks and they, "I didn't even ask you for those socks, but okay." So took this all over to school. The principal met me, and the secretary met me at the door and they had brought in the little girl. She wanted everything on right then and there. And so she puts on everything. She wanted the socks. We took off her shoes, and her socks were full appalled and I said, "Well, no wonder, Lord, you put in the socks. This little girl needed socks. I didn't even know that."

Marilyn Hontz: And you know what was so neat about that is, again, I could've just gone off and done the thing with Penny's and that would have been fine, but I would've missed a great blessing, because what happened as a result of that, those ladies in the office said, "Wow, Marilyn, this is so nice of you." I said, "Uh-uh (negative), this was none of my doing." And I had a chance to share with them about the Lord Jesus. I had been the secretary over, shared Christ with her just because of not going to Penny's. You know.

Marilyn Hontz: God is so great. I love this verse. It says, "Whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'" Isaiah 30:21. That is my prayer. I am learning so much in this. Don't any of you go away thinking that I've arrived in this, because I want to learn so much more. I am so hungry for the Lord Jesus to teach me and I just can't get enough of him.

Roger Marsh: That really should be the heart of every believer to know God more. This has been such an encouraging message from Mrs. Marilyn Hontz today on Family Talk. And doctor, one of the pictures that stuck with me from Marilyn was the Hontz family dog. He sat at the door every day for them to come home watching and waiting eagerly. And I know that loyalty and eagerness is exactly what God longs for in us.

Dr. Dobson: Well, we were flat out made for that purpose.

Roger Marsh: [crosstalk 00:21:09] true.

Dr. Dobson: And when people ask what is God's will for my life? Well among other things, we know that it's his will for us to seek after him as Marilyn said there, he can use all of the experiences in our lives, but usually he speaks through his word, through his Holy Spirit, through the counsel of godly people and through providential circumstances. So get into the word, open your heart to what the Lord wants to say to you today.

Roger Marsh: And the more that we listen to God, please know the more that we will see him at work. And doctor, as you said earlier, this is not something that comes easily to us. Intentionally listening to God takes work and it doesn't happen overnight, but we must remember that God is very eager to talk with us.

Dr. Dobson: It is rather faithless to think that the God who spun the universe into place can't figure out how to talk to you.

Roger Marsh: That's right.

Dr. Dobson: You know, if you listen, you'll hear his voice.

Roger Marsh: You will indeed. Doctor, if someone would like to learn more about our guest today, we encourage them to visit our broadcast page at [Drjamesdobson.org](http://Drjamesdobson.org).



There we have more information about Mrs. Marilyn Hontz, especially her book *Listening to God*. That's [Drjamesdobson.org](http://Drjamesdobson.org). And then go to today's broadcast page. Now you can also call and request a copy of this meaningful program. The number is 877-732-6825.

Dr. Dobson: And when you contact us, please prayerfully consider making a financial gift on behalf of the ministry of Family Talk. We simply could not reach out to families without the help of friends like you. And we want to continue to bring messages like the one we've heard today to the hearts of people-

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Dr. Dobson: ... who are trying to discern what God's will is in their own lives right now.

Roger Marsh: Amen. Well, with that, we pray that you have been encouraged by this program and we thank you for listening to us today. Join us again Monday for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. Have a blessed weekend.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hello, everyone. Roger Marsh here for Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. The news comes in all shapes, sizes, and formats these days, but how do you cut through all the noise and get to the heart of the matters affect your family? Well, come to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and sign up for Dr. Dobson's monthly newsletter. You'll find clarity on tough issues, encouragement for daily life and trusted principles to help you build strong, healthy and connected families. Go to [Drjamesdobson.org](http://Drjamesdobson.org) and sign up today. That's [Drjamesdobson.org](http://Drjamesdobson.org).

Dr. Clinton: Hi, everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton. Thank you so much for listening today to Family Talk, a radio production of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I wanted to take a moment to tell you a little bit about our growing ministry here. This new Institute is continuing Dr. Dobson's lifework by fighting for marriages and families. It's no secret that our Christian values are under attack and we must stand up for righteousness and biblical truth. Unashamedly, we believe this new Institute is doing just that. Aside from our Family Talk broadcast, there are three other divisions through which we're continuing this legacy of work. The first one is our educational partnerships with colleges and universities to encourage the next generation. Secondly, is the Dobson Policy Center. It keeps you informed on how the political arena influences the family. And lastly is our online collection of all of Dr. Dobson's work in the Dobson Digital Library. We're excited here at JDFI for this expansion. We hope you'll partner with us and thanks for being a friend of the family.

Roger Marsh: Hey, everyone. Roger Marsh here. When you think about your family and where they will be when you're no longer living, are you worried? Are you confident? Are you hopeful? What kind of legacy are you leaving for your children and their

children? Here at Family Talk, we're committed to helping you understand the legacy that you're leaving for your family. Join us today at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) for helpful insights, tips, and advice from Dr. James Dobson himself. And remember, your legacy matters.