



Christian Science Sentinel

"What I say unto you I say unto all, *Watch.*" —Jesus

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A Collection for Teens



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A Collection for Teens: July–December 2025

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL

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Finding Love after a breakup

Emma Grewal

I WAS TALKING TO a friend about a breakup that I was struggling to get over. Life had seemed so much better and brighter with my ex-boyfriend in it, I was telling her.

“Love makes us feel alive,” she said.

“It really does,” I readily agreed.

To which she responded, “Love makes us feel alive,” this time emphasizing the word *Love* as a synonym for God. I paused for a moment and let that sink in.

When I think of Love as a name for God, as I learned to do in Christian Science Sunday School, the concept of love takes on a whole new meaning. Divine Love is far greater than a feeling shared between two people. It is the ever-active power in our lives; something we can feel every moment.

My friend’s comment helped me realize that my ex wasn’t the source of my joy or vitality, even though it may have felt like it at times. His presence in my life simply helped me recognize more of Love’s full expression. His tenderness, humor, strength, and joy are qualities of God—divine Love—that knowing him had helped me see in new and meaningful ways. But ultimately, the expression of Love and Love’s goodness isn’t contingent on a person’s presence in my life. While my ex’s presence had faded from my days, divine Love itself—the source of the love I’d felt with him—had never left me. I realized that the qualities I treasured in him were also part of me because, as a child of God, I too reflect divine Love.

This recognition freed me from the belief that my life could be less bright without a certain individual in it. It allowed me to embrace instead the brilliance of life when viewed through the lens of divine Love—to open my heart to and feel this bountiful presence animating and illuminating each aspect of my experience. Every morning, I took a moment to still my thoughts and acknowledge the ever-presence of Love. I would feel Love all around me, filling me

up, and let it overflow throughout my day and to everyone I knew. Once I felt wrapped up in Love’s tender arms, I would ask the Divine what I needed to know that day and cherish the answer that came.

I started to feel more love around me wherever I went—be it strolling down the street, attending an event, or in brief exchanges with strangers. The void that before had felt so palpable disappeared as I realized that I was surrounded by Love and that I could see and feel it expressed in all my interactions—often in the most unexpected and delightful ways. I began to glimpse divine Love’s care and provision everywhere.

Shortly after this, I had an experience where I was unexpectedly alone at an all-day event. It was a series of talks that I’d been looking forward to and had planned to attend with a close friend. After learning that she wasn’t coming, I found myself sitting alone on a bench, looking at everyone else happily conversing with their friends and colleagues. Instead of feeling dismayed, though, I turned to God, affirming Love’s ever-presence, and ended up enjoying constant companionship with interesting people throughout the day. I moved through the event with joy and a feeling of belonging that was so fulfilling—both of which, I knew, could come only from God.

It’s true that Love makes us feel alive. And what a joy it is to know that Love is with us every moment. ●



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What I learned during CIT summer

Lily Hohner

LAST SUMMER, I PARTICIPATED in a seven-week counselor-in-training (CIT) leadership program with seven other girls at a camp for Christian Scientists in Maine.

Since this was our final summer in a cabin together, we made it our mission to spend as much time together as possible. This included chatting the night away.

As much as I loved the other girls, though, I wasn't fully on board with the late-night conversations. I was often tired after days full of activities and would go to bed . . . only to be kept awake by my cabinmates, who were frequently rowdy at night. Many times, I tried to politely ask them to quiet down, before finally

“Many times, I tried to politely ask my cabinmates to quiet down, before finally letting my temper get the best of me.

letting my temper get the best of me and raising my voice. Still, for most of the summer, nothing changed.

One morning, during our CIT meeting, we sang a hymn from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. The first verse says,

Speak gently, it is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently, let no harsh word mar
The good we may do here.
(David Bates, No. 315)

I realized that in my efforts to get some sleep, I had been so frustrated that I'd forgotten that our words and actions should always express love. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* emphasizes this point when it says, “The vital part, the heart and soul of Christian Science, is Love” (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 113). I realized that no matter how annoyed I was in any situation, I should always express Love, God, by being loving, patient, and kind. And in this situation, I could also understand that my cabinmates' behavior was based only on love for one another and for the time we got to spend together.

The message really hit home when we sang the hymn again at the camp's weekly testimony meeting later that day, and I committed myself to putting it into practice during the last weeks of the summer.

From then on, I made it my goal to cherish those nights and participate in the conversations instead of trying to shut them down. Loving my cabinmates turned out to be a big blessing for me, and I didn't even feel tired.

I am very grateful for this opportunity to grow in patience and grace. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Originally published in the July 28, 2025, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Real beauty—real healing

Lindsey Roder

IT WAS SUMMER, and I was at my favorite camp playing capture the flag.

I was having so much fun running around with my friends that I didn't notice I had run right through a patch of thorn bushes. Later that evening, when we were back at our cabin, one of my cabinmates pointed out that my legs were covered with red scratches. The scratches were a bit inflamed, and my skin was puffy with hives, but I hadn't even noticed because I was having so much fun. I wasn't worried, and my first thought was just to ignore it and go to bed. I didn't want anything to take away from the joy I was feeling.

Right then, this sentence from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy came to mind: "The recipe for beauty is to have less illusion and more Soul, to retreat from the belief of pain or pleasure in the body into the unchanging calm and glorious freedom of spiritual harmony" (pp. 247–248).

This was something I had been thinking about all week because it was included in the weekly Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*. I had learned when I was younger that Soul, the focus of that week's Lesson, is another name for God. So the recipe for beauty is to have more God in our lives—not that we can increase God's presence, which is infinite, but we can always more fully recognize and acknowledge that presence. I felt that this was exactly what we were doing at camp, because this was a camp for Christian Scientists, and we were learning more about practicing Christian Science through our various adventures.

At the time, I was in middle school, and I was self-conscious—always comparing myself to images in popular teen magazines. Compared to those images, I felt less than beautiful; but through reading the Bible Lesson on "Soul," I was beginning to understand that true beauty is

much more than skin deep. In the Bible, beauty is expressed through spiritual qualities such as grace, perseverance, courage, spiritual sturdiness, and strength of character. These traits, along with the joy that I had felt while playing capture the flag with my friends, represented my true beauty.

With this verse on my mind, I fell asleep.

The next morning, when I got dressed for the day, I noticed that my legs were totally clear. There wasn't a scratch or a scar on them, and the hives were gone, too. It was like I had been washed clean, and all that remained was perfect, untouched skin. Truly, I was grateful, but I was also in awe of Soul, God, and amazed that I had been healed so quickly!

The spiritual understanding that I gained and the realization that each week's Bible Lesson is filled with practical, healing ideas have stuck with me ever since. I later recognized as well that real, spiritual beauty remains perfect and intact in every individual creation of God.

In the years since, as I've grown in my understanding of Christian Science, I've understood more deeply that this healing wasn't some kind of divine touch-up. Instead, it revealed the ever-present spiritual beauty and perfection that every one of us possesses as an expression of God, Spirit, who is infinite good.

That's not to say that this one healing ended all of my struggles related to beauty and self-confidence; it didn't. But it did give me a foundation to build on, and as I've reflected on it over the years, it continues to teach me even deeper spiritual lessons. ●



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How God led me to healing

Hannah Wymer

FROM THE TIME I was a little girl, I'd been searching for something to bring me peace and a sense of purpose in my life.

Though I had been raised in a Christian household, I still felt far away from God. I was an only child and struggled to fit in with the other kids at school. I was also very sick for most of my childhood, and nothing brought healing.

During my early years of high school, I fell into a deep depression and suffered from severe anxiety. Thoughts like “You’re not good enough,” and “You’re meant to be alone” circled in my mind every day. It got to the point where I wasn’t sure if I wanted to keep living. I was questioning everything: my existence, my purpose, and God.

Just when I felt I had reached a breaking point, a thought came to me that was more spiritual than what I was feeling at the time. And somehow I

I was questioning everything: my existence, my purpose, and God.

knew that this thought had to have come from God. It was, “I need you to keep going.” So I decided to do that.

As I entered my junior year, I had the opportunity to attend a school that had originally been started for Christian Scientists. This school was near my home, and I decided to try it out—and was welcomed into this community with open arms.

I also met the person who became a mentor to me and is now a Christian Science practitioner—someone you can ask to pray for you when you need healing. She shared an important idea with me at a time when there was a lot of discussion about contagion. She told me that when we believe that any kind of sickness or spread of disease has more power than God, we are breaking the First Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

Although this may seem like an unusual comment, it somehow made sense to me spiritually. I realized that this idea could be applied not only to contagious diseases but also to other things in my life that I had been wrestling with—depression, anxiety, sickness, and feeling alone. I realized that I didn’t want to believe that there was anything more powerful than God. It didn’t feel right for me to think that evil could be prevalent in my life and dictate how I live.

I began to dig deeper into Christian Science, reaching out to people in my school community to help me better my understanding. One lady I talked with gave me a copy of the Bible and of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science. Something I valued as I studied *Science and Health* was the way healing is emphasized, since that was something that had been missing in my life growing up. The idea of God being divine Love helped me realize that Love itself is the key to healing.

I was eager to take in everything I was learning, but I was still struggling to apply it directly and consistently in my life. Although I had support, my family had reservations about my study of Christian Science because they had never heard of it before and were professionals in the medical field.

On top of that, I wrestled with completely letting go of material means of comfort and relief, which were all I had known growing up. This included taking medication for my illnesses, caving to peer pressure, and looking to relationships with guys to feel loved. I wanted to let go of these things because I believed it was essential to growing spiritually and deepening my relationship with God.

As I continued working with a practitioner, praying, and studying *Science and Health* and Mrs. Eddy’s other writings over several more years, I realized that the reality is that God is my

everything. He is all I need to be happy, healthy, peaceful, and loved. One of my favorite ideas that I prayed with is, “When we realize that Life is Spirit, never in nor of matter, this understanding will expand into self-completeness, finding all in God, good, and needing no other consciousness” (*Science and Health*, p. 264).

Once I finally understood that God, Love, is the source of all good, I was healed of the sicknesses that I’d had as a child, including depression and anxiety; I learned to love myself the way God created me; and I started looking for healthy and fruitful relationships with others.

Also, because I chose to stand firm in my study of Christian Science, I eventually gained the support of my parents and even inspired my mom, who started reading Mrs. Eddy’s writings and having healings, too.

While my journey of learning more about my relation to God and practicing Christian Science

has been challenging, it has also been worthwhile. I know now that even when I felt far away from God as a child, He was always with me. Even in the moments when I felt most alone, God was guiding me every step of the way and leading me to Christian Science so I could experience true healing.

I know now that I am His beloved daughter and that His love will always be with me wherever I go. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

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Prayer—and safety—in the wilderness

Joan Wolcott

IT WAS THE SUMMER opportunity of a lifetime: eight weeks hiking and backpacking across the American West in wilderness regions ranging from deserts to mountains. I would be one of two counselors along with a trip leader guiding twenty teens. We would sleep outside every night, cook our own food, and travel together in a large school bus.

During my interview for this job, the camp directors had voiced a concern. Since I was a Christian Scientist, they wanted to know how I would deal with a camper’s illness or injury. I assured them that I’d readily administer first aid

and, if needed, accompany a camper to a hospital. In addition, I told them that my first response in any situation would be to calm the fear. My answers satisfied them, and I was hired.

On our first backpacking trip, the trip leader and my fellow counselor had a similar concern: What if I were injured or became ill on the trip? In remote wilderness areas, there would be no emergency communication or transportation. I answered that I would pray to the best of my ability and, if we were near a phone, contact a Christian Science practitioner for prayer. Then they asked me a harder question: What would

I want them to do if I fell and became unconscious?

I could appreciate their concern. I said that they should do whatever felt most comfortable to them at the time. This settled things for them. But as I lay awake under the stars that night, I felt unsettled about my reply. As I listened to God for a better answer, it came to me in words from a hymn I'd sung in Christian Science Sunday School:

Father, we Thy loving children
Lift our hearts in joy today,
Knowing well that Thou wilt keep us
Ever in Thy blessed way. . . .
In Thy Spirit living, moving,
We shall neither faint nor fall.
(Elizabeth C. Adams, *Christian
Science Hymnal*, No. 58)

What a perfect promise, directly from God! Through this angel message, God was assuring me that I would not fall or become unconscious. This was my complete answer, just between God and me. In awe, I fell asleep, feeling so safe and close to my divine Father-Mother.

This spiritual assurance of safety and protection stayed with me that whole summer. And in several instances, it was evident that it extended to others, as well.

During our last night in a canyon, a sudden rainstorm caused flash flooding. Our sleeping bags got soaked, but since we'd camped well above the riverbed, no one was endangered and no gear was washed away. In the morning, we hiked out barefoot through the previously dry riverbed—now knee-deep in water—grateful for the safety we'd experienced.

Our most challenging climb of the trip was a glacier-topped mountain over fourteen thousand feet high. After a day of snow-climbing instruction, we all successfully summited the mountain, roped together in teams, with crampons on our feet and ice axes in our hands. There were no problems on this demanding, high-altitude hike, and though I wasn't the most athletic or experienced, I was able to summit with the first rope team. It was both a personal victory and a collective one.

That whole summer, I experienced no sickness or injury. In the few instances when I accompanied a camper to the hospital, their needs were met simply and readily. On only one day was a camper unable to participate due to injury. Of the many groups on trips that summer, our group had the least number of injuries.

This protection wasn't a coincidence, but rather a natural outcome of my growing trust and confidence in God and my quiet, prayerful embrace of those around me. That summer, I'd started studying the weekly Bible Lesson found in the *Christian Science Quarterly*. Through this focused spiritual study, I felt close to God and completely supported during our adventure—and this was naturally a blessing to others as well. Reading this Lesson early every morning neither burdened me nor imposed on others. The Bible and its companion book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, tucked into my backpack on long hikes never felt heavy.

That summer, I learned I could trust God in all situations and saw how my individual spiritual standpoint could bless those around me, even without words. ●



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Feeling God’s presence heals

Grace Hempzell

LAST SUMMER, I SPENT seven weeks completing the Counselor in Training (CIT) program at a camp for Christian Scientists in Maine.

The summer went incredibly well. I was putting into practice in my everyday life what I was learning about God, and during a CIT trip, something happened that solidified all that I’d learned.

We were sea kayaking to different islands around Stonington, Maine. On one island, we found a quarry with a big rock that we could jump off of into the water. All of us jumped together the first time, and it went smoothly.

But on the second jump, I went too far down and hit my foot on a rock, leaving a gash on top of the foot. I swam to shore, but when I saw the injury, instead of freaking out, I felt enveloped by an overwhelming peace. At the time, I didn’t know

“Instead of freaking out, I felt enveloped by an overwhelming peace.”

why. Honestly, I was shocked because I’d experienced similar injuries in the past and had never felt that kind of peace before.

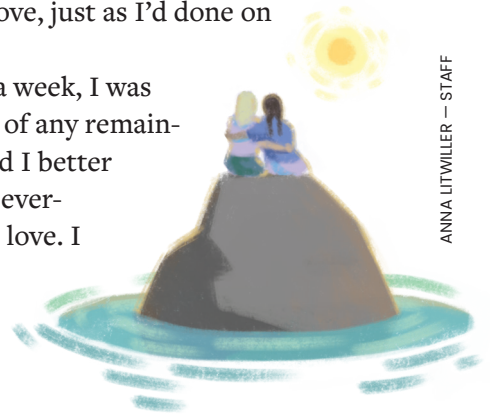
Thinking back on it, though, I know it was because my thoughts immediately went to God, which is something I had been doing all summer. Instead of focusing on how severe the injury was, I thought about God and His love and care, which surround everyone all the time, including me. I felt God’s presence, which helped me immediately acknowledge that because God is totally good and always perfect, so am I as His likeness. This is what the Bible tells us in the first chapter of Genesis.

I’ve learned that gratitude is one way we can pray and feel closer to God. So, as I sat there with my counselor, I closed my eyes and silently expressed gratitude for everyone on the trip and back at camp and others who came to mind.

After a couple of minutes and some comforting words from my counselor, I opened my eyes to see the gash beginning to close and grow smaller. I put a bandage on it and finished the rest of the trip.

Although the injury was starting to heal, I still felt some discomfort on the top of my foot, especially while walking and wearing shoes. But I wasn’t willing to accept this as legitimate or necessary, so I carved out more time in my day for prayer and spiritual study. During this time, I kept coming across the same Bible verse in the weekly Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*, in articles from the Christian Science magazines, and in other places, too. It says, referring to God, “He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Matthew 4:6). This verse came to thought each time I felt discomfort in my foot. It helped me turn to God and feel His love, just as I’d done on the trip.

Within about a week, I was completely healed of any remaining discomfort, and I better understood God’s ever-presence and pure love. I am very grateful for this healing and for all that I am learning in Christian Science. ●



ANNA LITWILLER — STAFF

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Protected on the road

Reid Foss

MY HIGH SCHOOL OFFERED a driver's education class that included classroom study and actual driving with an instructor. These specially equipped cars had a brake on the passenger side to allow the instructor to brake if necessary.

We lived in an area of mountains and rolling hills and many roads with limited visibility. Our family often traveled a road that went down a mountain. It was very curvy and ran along a cliff on one side and the steep embankment of the mountain on the other. You often couldn't see more than a few car lengths ahead. It was narrow, had no cross streets, only one lane each way, and had few places to turn off or to get out of either lane.

On one of the driving days, the instructor chose this road for me, and since I knew it well, I was excited to drive it myself.

Just as I entered a narrow portion of the road, I heard a voice in my head that said, "Get off the road." It was a surprising message, but I recognized that voice. I'd learned in Christian Science Sunday School that it was what you'd call an angel message from God. In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy defines *angels* as "God's thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect" (p. 581). I had heard this

“Just as I entered a narrow portion of the road, I heard a voice in my head that said, “Get off the road.”

type of message many times before and had always benefited from following its direction. But there was no place to get off the road.

Instantly, a picture of a place formed in my thought. It was a very small turnout on the edge of the cliff, right where the road took a sharp turn to the left. I felt that this was also an angel message, directing me where to go.



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I started to speed up to get to this spot in the road because of the urgency of the message from God. As I was exceeding the speed limit, the instructor started applying his brake to slow us down, but he didn't say a word to me, as I think he could tell I was very focused on the road.

This continued until I could see the turnout I had thought of, the only safe spot available. I pulled over and applied my brake. We stopped safely on the edge of the cliff, in a cloud of dust.

As the dust began to clear, two cars that we hadn't been able to see or hear before appeared up the road, racing at us side by side, one in each lane. They sped past us around the curve.

All was quiet in the car as we took in the situation. I silently expressed gratitude, knowing that it was God who had guided us, protected us, kept everyone in the car calm, and supplied the solution to a situation none of us could have anticipated.

One of the other students in the back seat asked, “How did you know?”

After a moment of reflection, my reply was something along the lines of, “I pray and study to be directed by God and to understand His protection in my life and the benefits He supplies, not only to me but to everyone. And in this case, I felt directed to get to this spot so we could get off the road.”

No one said anything for a while, and no other cars appeared on the road in either direction. Then, as if trusting my intuition, the instructor asked, “Is it safe to go now?”

A calming feeling came over me, like a mother’s hug, and I knew it was God assuring me that it was safe to get back on the road. So we continued on.

The two other students in the car, along with the instructor, looked at me a little differently after that. But even if they didn’t fully understand what had happened, I knew they had experienced God’s protection and guidance just as I had.

I’m so grateful for the Bible and *Science and Health*, which teach us all about God and how to experience His guidance, protection, and love in our lives. And I’m so grateful to God for everything. ●

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How can I be myself?

Deborah Huebsch

Q: I want to be myself, but I’m kind of scared to because of what other people might think. Can you help?

A: I’m a horse person, which means I’ve always loved wearing jeans and boots. But then Wednesday night would roll around, when I would go to the testimony meeting at my local branch Church of Christ, Scientist. So what did I do? I put on white pants, a silk shirt, and a gold chain (an acceptable “dress code” at that time).

This wasn’t comfortable for me, but I felt I couldn’t be who I was. The pressure I was feeling to conform to others’ expectations was clearly dictating the way I dressed. But I also didn’t feel OK unless I portrayed a certain “look.”

What was this really about? It was clear evidence that I was taking others’ opinions as standards for my own behavior. Was I afraid of other people’s judgment if I dared to dress in a way that was comfortable to me but didn’t conform to what they thought was acceptable? Yes. Ugh!

But this is about more than simply what we think we should wear. It also raises a deeper question: How can we truly be ourselves and feel OK about it? Maybe we need to start by seeing who we really are—I mean spiritually.

One of the great things, really *amazing* things, about God’s creation is its incredible diversity. Every single element of the universe is unique and individual. And each one of us, as God’s creation, is different from every other individuality. We aren’t clones. Each of us is what God is expressing as our own individual constellation of everything good. Each of us has God-bestowed gifts that only we can express in our own unique way. Just like no two snowflakes are exactly alike, no two of us are exactly alike. And that’s a good thing! It shows that we are all needed—each an essential part of this wonderful, infinite creation.

Understanding that gives us a solid basis for knowing who we are. God defines us. Externals don’t.

It takes courage to be true to this God-defined version of ourselves. We may seem different or

feel like we don't fit in. There's a natural tendency to want to be part of the "in crowd." It's that desire to feel accepted that sometimes causes us to make choices about the way we present ourselves that aren't really us. This can range from dressing in ways that don't feel right to sometimes making bad decisions.

God is 100 percent good. So when we know that we are God-created and therefore good, this gives us the strength not to do things just because other people do them. Knowing that we are always OK because of who we are on the inside—who we are spiritually—gives us that courage.

There's a quiet place in each of us that knows what's right in any situation. It's part of who we are. After all, we are created with all of the good

a quiet, gentle feeling that I am good because my creator is good.

So how did this work for me? One Wednesday night, instead of dressing in the socially acceptable manner, I pulled on a clean pair of jeans and a nice shirt, added the boots, and off to church I went. And what happened? Basically nothing. Except I felt better because I was being honest about who I am.

Shakespeare makes a great point that sums up the importance of being true to what God has created us to be instead of what we—or others—think we should be. And Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered Christian Science, refers to this quote in her writings. Here it is:

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
(Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*
1883–1896, p. 226)

In other words, we really can be ourselves, and that is a beautiful thing. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

“Was I afraid of other people’s judgment if I dressed in a way that didn’t conform to what they thought was acceptable? Yes. Ugh!

qualities that God imparts to all of us. Through prayer, we can be in touch with these qualities and recognize that they give us direction, protection, and a sense of being OK. This gives us the confidence to make choices that are good. And it keeps us from getting hooked into the bad choices.

How do we pray for this kind of courage? What I do sometimes is ask God to introduce me to me. I ask God to tell me who I am. And then I listen to what comes to my thoughts. The answers come as

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Standing up for my freedom

Dean Ziesler



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

AT THE START OF the summer, I was mountain biking with my team when I hit a jump faster than I had expected and was launched over the handlebars.

When I landed, I felt a sharp pain in my forearm. The coach who had been following me stopped to help. We walked back to base together because I could no longer use my arm to pull the brakes. On the walk back, I was thinking about the last time I hurt my arm mountain biking, and I was sad that most of my summer would probably be ruined again by a similar injury.

When we got to the base, my mom and another coach were waiting for me. The coach was a nurse and checked my arm. She told me it was broken, confirming my worst fear.

On the drive home, Mom and I talked about my God-given freedom—that as His child, I was free from breakage and didn't have to accept this diagnosis. These were ideas I'd been learning while studying Christian Science. In Christian Science Sunday School and at home, we talk about the fact that we are made in the likeness of God, who is Spirit and perfect. Since I'm the reflection of Spirit, I'm spiritual and perfect, too. So I can't be broken.

The next day, my mom told me she had made an appointment with a doctor where we could get a waterproof cast so I could swim and go on our boat. When she told me this, I froze in fear. I really didn't want to go. She could sense my apprehension and told me I didn't have to go to the doctor. She said that we could instead rely on Christian Science for healing.

I felt very strongly that I wanted to rely on Christian Science. I thought of this as sort of like an ultimatum—a final decision to fully stand up for my freedom. Knowing I could make the choice to stand for my freedom by relying on Christian

Science gave me a feeling of strength and let me set an ultimatum in my thoughts about what I was going to believe, which is that I wasn't broken.

Even though my arm still hurt, I was firm in my understanding that I was truly spiritual—completely whole. The last time I'd had this injury, when the doctor told me my arm was broken, it made me feel bad. I hadn't liked being told I was broken, and I didn't want to hear that again. Thinking about myself as spiritually whole, I told my mom I didn't want to go to the doctor, and she said OK. Immediately I felt stronger. We both knew this was the right choice because I felt so much relief.

For a few days, I wore the splint that the mountain biking team had given me, but because of our prayers, I didn't need it for long. During that time, I still went outside and played. I knew I was fully healed a few weeks later when we went tubing behind our speedboat and I could hold on with no problem. I even asked the driver to drive faster!

It felt so right to refuse to believe that I was broken. I knew that was nothing more than a false claim about me, and I wanted to hold on to what was spiritually true. A statement by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, describes what is spiritually true about everyone, including me. She writes, "Man's origin and existence being in Him [God], man is the ultimatum of perfection, and by no means the medium of imperfection" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 79).

The crux of this healing is that I know that I am a complete expression of God and that I am spiritual, so I cannot be broken. By standing up for my freedom, I was able to have a free and full summer. ●

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Finding home far away from home

Sandrina Kline

I WENT TO LIVE in a different country without my family for the first time at just sixteen years old.

When my family dropped me off at the airport for my flight to Norway, I felt a rush of excitement and nervousness. This was the next chapter in my life, and I was ready to fit right in—to adjust to the new culture and make friends. But it didn't happen quite that easily.

At school, everything was taught in a different language, so even though I was studying the language, I still had to rely heavily on my peers. I started to feel like a burden to my classmates,

Sometimes I felt hopeless thinking that I wouldn't ever make good friends or truly bond with my host family.

and although I was forming relationships with some of them, I missed my family and friendships back home. Also, seeing my classmates with their friends made me feel left out, since I didn't feel I had anyone I was close enough with to turn to.

At the home of my host family, it was difficult to feel comfortable with them because, even though they were welcoming and treated me like family, I felt isolated and sad. Sometimes I felt hopeless, thinking that I wouldn't ever make good friends or truly bond with my host family. The constant desire to be home in America didn't help. It was taking much longer for me to feel happy and assimilated than I'd expected.

However, one of the things that was a constant for me through all this was Christian Science, and I was so glad to know that I could always rely on God, no matter where I was. I contacted a Christian Science practitioner and

asked her to pray for me, as I knew this would help me find a way through my struggles. She reminded me that God's love is everlasting, a constant. God is always comforting me and guiding every step I take.

She shared a Bible passage with me that really helped. It says, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38, 39). To me, this meant that I could feel God's love everywhere I went, no matter what.

I was also reminded of a sentence from Mary Baker Eddy's writings that helped as well: "Gratitude and love should abide in every heart each day of all the years" (*Manual of The Mother Church*, p. 60). I realized that I had so many things to be grateful for, like being in a safe, caring home with wonderful people.

I found that Hymn 497 from the *Christian Science Hymnal: Hymns 430–603* talks about home as not a physical location that we can leave behind, but a spiritual idea that's always with us. It begins, "Home is the consciousness of good/That holds us in its wide embrace" (Rosemary C. Cobham). Realizing that I could connect the feeling of being at home with feeling God's comforting presence really helped me.

Though I'd spent a few weeks feeling empty inside, now things started to get better. The language started to click with me, which allowed me to become closer to my peers and host family. The world opened up as I started enjoying the little things—cozy movie nights with my host family, café and library trips with friends from school, the beautiful city, and the knowledge that God was right there with me wherever I was.

I ended the exchange year with so much joy and a complete feeling of home that went beyond just being comfortable in a new location. I never wanted to leave Norway, which is the opposite of the way I started the year!

Knowing that God is the source of all good and that nothing is separating me from His love changed this experience and my life completely. I'll take these lessons with me wherever I go. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

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Struggling to write a college essay?

Ashley Packard

IT WAS COLLEGE APPLICATION time. Though many described the process as grueling and exhausting, I saw it as an opportunity to share my experiences with Christian Science, deepen my understanding of myself, and bless each reader through my writing.

At first, the process was relatively smooth: fine-tuning personal statements, curating my story, researching schools, and speaking with alumni. I didn't really encounter difficulty until I reached the final of four supplemental essays for one school. I had rewritten this essay multiple times, but nothing stood out. The message

felt flat, misaligned with what I truly wanted to say.

Then, inspiration struck. I realized I had been approaching the essay the wrong way. Instead of trying to showcase myself, I needed to highlight God's wonderful works in my life. My role was not to impress, but to express—to reflect God, Mind, in every word. I knew that turning to God meant there could be no misstep. Trusting in Him, I leaned into the understanding that nothing bad could come from sincerely sharing God's love with the world.

With that realization, I ran to my room, stepped into my closet, and shut the door—taking

to heart this verse: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6).

I sat in silence for a few minutes, praying, as I listened for whatever God had for me to hear.

Soon, an idea came to me. I knew instantly this was from God. That same week in Christian Science Sunday School, we had talked about light: how darkness is merely the absence of light, and

rejection, but kept praying—knowing that whatever happened was God-directed.

When I opened the letter, joyful tears filled my eyes. I had been accepted.

But the depth of my gratitude didn’t fully hit me until I’d received the school’s welcome package. Right on top was my acceptance letter, a flag, and a sticker that read: “Let there be light.”

In that moment, I felt God’s love around me—so full and so tender. I knew, without a doubt, that this was where I was meant to be.

Today, I’m a student at that very school, and I continue to give thanks for the divine guidance that led me here.

I know even more clearly now that each day is a new opportunity to express God’s goodness and to reflect His light to others. ●

“I had rewritten this essay multiple times, but nothing stood out.

how light fills all space. Inspired by the verse, “For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness” (Psalms 18:28), I began writing.

What started as a dull, directionless essay transformed into a letter of gratitude to God. I wrote about how the light of divine Love, illuminating my life, had propelled me to share love with peers, teachers, mentors, coaches, and employers. I wrote from a place of sincere thankfulness, recognizing the tangible changes God had made in my life—changes that even made it possible for me to be applying to college.

I finished the essay and submitted it with my mom at my side. I was filled with a deep feeling of peace. I understood then that true inspiration blesses not just the writer, but every one of God’s children who encounters it.

About four months later, I had heard back from most of the schools—some acceptances, some rejections. Still, I trusted God and didn’t try to define where my “right place” was; I knew that was for God to reveal.

Then came decision day for the school I had written my gratitude letter for. I expected a



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Can we trust God in an emergency?

Joan Ware

I GREW UP IN Minnesota, where the winters are long and often extremely cold and snowy. I loved to be outdoors and especially loved walks in nature. So I would bundle up and head out with my very eager dog, Betsy. These walks were special times when I could feel close to God and learn more of His great love for us all. I always loved the inspiration I got on my walks.

One very cold day when I was in high school, I headed out with Betsy to a refuge area that had trails in a beautiful nature setting. It was swampy in the summer, but I was sure the pond would be frozen solid.

As we got closer to this area, Betsy ran ahead looking for birds. The next thing I knew, she had gotten too close to the edge of the pond and broken through the ice and was now frantically clawing to get out of the icy water. The ice was a lot thinner than I had expected, and the edge kept breaking off. Betsy couldn't get any traction on the slippery surface.

I was way too far from any house to run for help, and there was no one else around. I also didn't have a cellphone.

What I did have in that moment was everything I'd learned in Christian Science Sunday School. The Bible reports God saying of His beloved children, "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). And I'd read in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* that "divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 494).

These aren't just comforting words. They are promises, and even laws, of God. They tell of an all-powerful, all-loving God who is always with us, guiding, directing, protecting, and providing.

I'd also read many stories in the Bible about people who'd found themselves in desperate situations and turned to God. Each had had just the right idea, the right next steps, and the strength,

courage, and trust to come through that experience safely. Daniel in the lions' den, Jesus through his crucifixion experience—and many others. That same law of Love that the Bible shows us again and again is also in operation for us.

So even though I was in what seemed like a very scary situation, I don't remember being afraid. I knew that God was right there with us and would help us. Immediately, an idea came to me calmly and clearly: to get on my stomach, crawl to the edge of the ice—just close enough to grab Betsy's collar—and then quickly roll away with her. I immediately obeyed. I got on my belly, crawled, grabbed her collar, and rolled.

We were safe! Well, we were safe from the freezing water and the thin ice, but now we had a long walk home. As we headed off, I knew that God would take us safely all the way and that I could expect no harmful aftereffects for either of us.

By the time we got home, my jeans were frozen solid, and every hair on Betsy was a tiny icicle. She sounded like a walking wind chime! My mom had to pull the iced jeans off my legs. We got dried off and warmed up and had no problems from that experience.

I never felt fear, just calm listening and an assurance of God's protecting care. Afterward, I had no mental reruns of the severity of the situation—just the memory of inspiration and joy in the immediate, specific, and practical loving care God had provided.

Several years later, I heard a radio program in which listeners were told what to do if they found themselves in a broken ice situation. The steps



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they shared were exactly the same as the ones I had gotten from God that day.

We can keep learning more about how God, our Father-Mother, knows us, loves us, and constantly communicates to us the next steps in any situation. What's required to consistently hear and

be able to follow those ideas? We need to make mental room for the answers that are coming. And as we turn to God more, we begin to trust God more. Then our heart is more open and ready to receive and feel divine Love's constant love and care. It's there for us. ●

Originally published in the December 15, 2025, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

A healing over the holidays

Sophie Ungerleider

I WAS SWAMPED. I had finals to finish, a dorm room to pack, a responsibility as a resident assistant to get students off campus for winter break, and about a million other tasks—and a phone that wasn't working reliably.

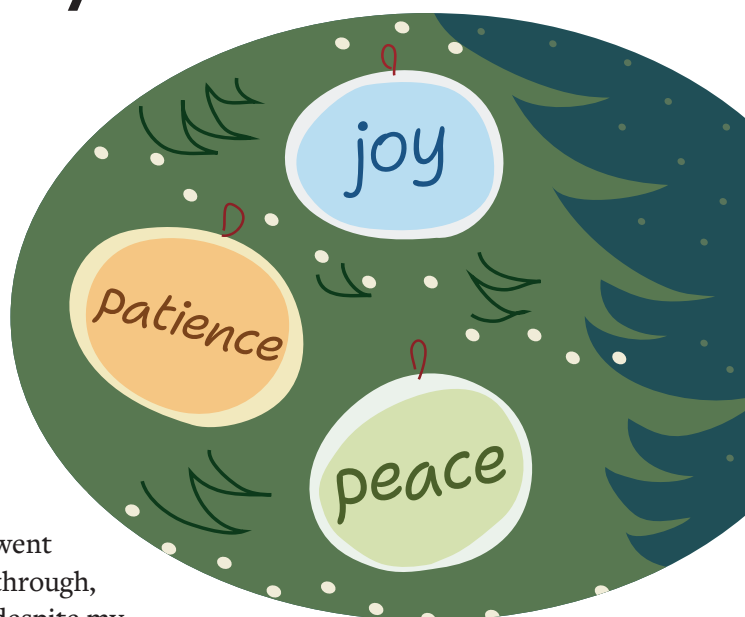
But after getting through all of this, I would finally be able to spend time with my family over the holidays. This particular year felt special because I was getting some one-on-one time with my grandma before the rest of my family arrived. To me, Christmas has always been about spending time with loved ones. It can be fun to give gifts that I've picked out or made, but being together is always the best gift.

By the time I boarded my flight home, I'd finished everything on my to-do list but was feeling completely burned out. I was looking forward to the long flight to unwind, rest, and reset. But before the plane even took off, I noticed that something in my back felt out of whack. I couldn't move my neck or back, and my immediate thought was, "Really? After all this, I can't just relax?"

After my short-lived pity party, I reached out to a Christian Science practitioner to pray for me. This felt like a natural step, because I'd had many healings through Christian Science, often through the prayers of a practitioner. To my relief, my text

went through, despite my phone's issues, and I quickly received a reply with the comforting reminder that I am God's loved child and completely safe.

The practitioner also shared this passage from Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "You say, 'Toil fatigues me.' But what is this *me*? Is it muscle or mind? Which is tired and so speaks? Without mind, could the muscles be tired? Do the muscles talk, or do you talk for them? Matter is non-intelligent" (pp. 217–218). I especially appreciated this idea because it helped me realize that, while the issue may have looked like a back problem, what I was



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really dealing with was a thought that needed adjusting. I realized that the feeling of having been exhausted by school was the real problem I needed to address. Instead of a change in my body, the real change that needed to happen was understanding more clearly what was true about me from a spiritual perspective.

One way I do this is by focusing on spiritual qualities—such as peace, patience, and joy—that make up my true identity as the expression of God, Spirit. Since these qualities come from God, they’re always part of who I am, but focusing on them helps me keep my thoughts on what’s spiritually true and see myself as God sees me. In this situation, it strengthened me to think of myself this way, and I continued praying with these ideas as I finished my travels and arrived at my grandma’s house.

Over the next few days, I made progress in my mobility while also spending time with my grandma and, later, the rest of my family. The love I felt around me, sourced in God and expressed by my family members, spiritually fueled me.

By Christmas Eve, I was completely healed and able to go for a run—a true expression of my God-given strength and freedom. I felt so embraced by my divine Father-Mother’s love, and I knew God was with me during this healing.

I’m so grateful to know that we can find both peace and joy during the holidays, regardless of whether we’re busy or quiet. These qualities don’t come and go depending on what’s going on in our lives. Because they come from God, they’re always present in each of us. ●

Originally published in the December 22, 2025, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

How Christian Science helps me with friendships

Callie Wilkinson

ONE DAY, while I was out for a walk, I was thinking about past friendships I felt I’d messed up or friends I don’t talk to anymore. I felt a strong urge to text them. Because it seems like there are a lot of highs and lows in high school, I wanted to tell these friends how things had been going for me and ask how they were doing.

I’ve struggled with friendships and connecting with peers my age my entire life, so I’ve sometimes felt isolated and alone. But in this case, I felt inspired to reach out to my friends.

Some never replied to my texts, but others wrote back and said they were so grateful to me for checking in. They told me they missed being

with me, and I said I missed being with them, too.

When I woke up the next morning, I saw that I’d even gotten texts from a few friends I hadn’t texted, and they also told me they missed me. This might seem like a coincidence, or friends just being nice, but to me it was something much deeper. I felt a strong sense of God’s overflowing love, and it reminded me of a hymn I like from the *Christian Science Hymnal* that talks about how Jesus taught us about this love from God. The first verse says,



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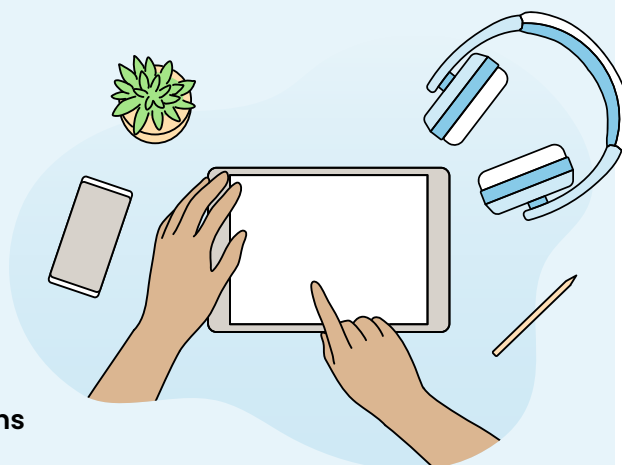
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