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: January–June 2026

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Struggling with math?

Sophia Zinn

I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT I was bad at math. The formulas and steps were confusing and most math concepts felt incomprehensible.

Junior year of high school, nothing in my algebra class made sense, and my frustration only grew. I believed myself to be "laughably terrible" at math.

And just to lower my confidence even further, I scored a surprisingly low grade of 20 percent on my first test. I hold myself to high standards, so this destroyed me. I felt that I'd disappointed my teachers and myself. I wondered how this would affect my GPA and how colleges would see me. I began to spiral and think, "Colleges don't want a failure! I won't be able to go anywhere! I'll end up with a terrible life all because of this stupid test!"

> **"Nothing in my algebra class made sense, and my frustration only grew.**

As the year progressed, I didn't pass a single math quiz, test, or lesson.

I thought that I was lacking the knowledge I needed to do well in this class. I was constantly worried—worried about my future, worried about my grades, worried about my capabilities. I was so stuck in a never-ending loop of fear.

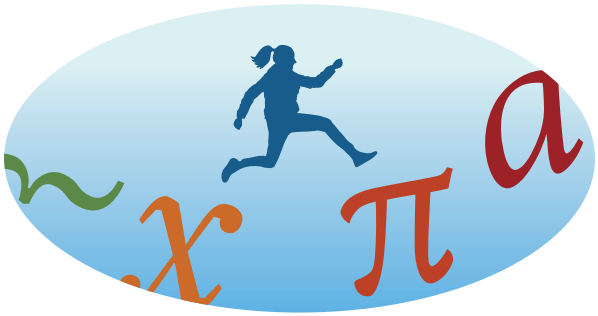
Following winter break, our class got a new math teacher. While my failure in math had had nothing to do with my previous teacher, I did appreciate something this new teacher brought to the table.

I go to a school for Christian Scientists, and before each test, my new teacher would share an idea that was helpful for our prayers about the exam. One in particular stuck with me. It's from the Bible, and it says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6, New International Version).

What I took from this passage was to show gratitude, even when it doesn't seem like you have much to be grateful for. Gratitude is the opposite of lack; it is the very essence of abundance! As I'm learning more about Christian Science, I'm understanding that God is the source of all good. The truth is that God created us, His children, to express Him. So really, I don't lack anything—especially knowledge. I saw that I was capable of understanding anything in my math class because God is all-knowing and I reflect Him.

I also realized I was surrounded by people who wanted to help. My community consisted of math teachers who cared, tutors who showed up and were helpful, and most of all, friends and family who stood by my side, and loved me unconditionally despite my math grades. All of this was a reminder that God is always with us, giving us everything we need.

With gratitude, and a newly developed spiritual understanding of myself, I found that my performance in math turned around. Thanks to Christian Science, I was able to successfully pass Algebra II my junior year. ●



AARON CRANFORD – STAFF
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If you're facing a moral dilemma

Rachel Richardson

IT WAS A QUESTION I wasn't expecting. A female choreographer for a dance piece I was in asked the women in the group if we would be OK performing topless.

She requested that we think it over and then come to her with our thoughts. While my initial reaction was to feel conflicted, I could tell that the other women were excited about it, which made me hesitant to speak up. I didn't want to ruin the choreographer's vision or spoil the experience for my friends.

During my time as a dancer, I have become very comfortable changing in front of colleagues and dancing in tight costumes, so technically I wasn't uncomfortable with the concept of dancing topless. But it still didn't feel like something I wanted to do. I knew it would take courage to speak up for myself, but I didn't want to avoid doing so based on fear of being different or not being accepted. I wanted to speak up for myself based on whatever decision really felt right for me.

> **"I knew it would take courage to speak up for myself, but I didn't want to avoid doing so based on fear of being different.**

Initially, I couldn't see any reason why performing topless would be wrong. It was possible that it would make others uncomfortable, but that is true of so much art. There would be a warning in the playbill and online so people could just not come if it was something they didn't want to see. It was also scheduled to be a fairly small performance for a select group.

At the time, I was also taking an academic class where we were studying ethics and morals. I had been trying to better understand morality as a practical support to individuals and society—as something that improves our lives rather than something that is restrictive or inconsistent.

I knew that many concepts of morality have evolved from religion and seem to have their basis in beliefs about heaven and hell—or about God keeping a tally of what individuals do right or wrong and rewarding or punishing them accordingly. As a student of Christian Science, my understanding of God as divine Love especially didn't fit with that last notion.

Also, the concept of inconsistent rules that were detrimental to certain individuals or groups didn't work with my understanding of God as Principle, who orchestrates and governs life in a harmonious way that gives everything purpose. Like the laws of mathematics, nothing in God's universe is random or arbitrary. Principle expresses itself in consistency, harmony, and universal goodness.

It seemed clear that a good starting place would be to better understand my own spirituality and share that understanding with others. I knew that my spiritual identity was rooted in God, who is all good, which means I already express all the qualities that I want to contribute to society. It felt like dancing topless would put an extra focus on my physicality that didn't feel necessary or helpful. Instead, thinking of my true substance as spiritual gives me an unchanging sense of stability and worth, which feels very different than basing my worth on how I or others view my physicality.

I was happy to be able to tell the choreographer that I wasn't interested in dancing topless, because it felt empowering to be clear about where I stood and not have fear as part of my decision-making.

When I shared my thoughts with the choreographer, she was kind and understanding and

ultimately decided to go forward without the nudity. After the performance, multiple friends in the audience and my fellow dancers all commented that they were grateful that the piece had not been topless. They felt that the overall message of the piece was delivered much more clearly without that as a distraction.

This was an important moment for me, as it gave me practice in speaking up for myself without fear and in relying on prayer to know what was really right to do. I was grateful to see that Christian Science offers clear solutions to moral dilemmas and that the result was collectively acknowledged as a good outcome.●

Originally published in the January 19, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

When your to-do list is way too long

Holly Bell

I WAS FEELING STRESSED. I was preparing to go to a camp for Christian Scientists in the United Kingdom where I live, and it seemed as though I had 101 tasks to do. As I was walking upstairs to get a few things done, a thought came to me from that week's Bible Lesson from the *Christian Science Quarterly*. The passage was from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy and it says: "Beholding the infinite tasks of truth, we pause,—wait on God. Then we push onward, until boundless thought walks enraptured, and conception unconfined is winged to reach the divine glory" (p. 323). I said to myself, "Yes, I have infinite tasks to do today!" Then, without really thinking about the true meaning of that passage, I pushed it out of thought.

A few moments later, I realized I needed to go into the loft in my house to get some things for camp. So I pulled down the ladders and climbed up. It's a very dark space and some spots are only fixed with plasterboard, which is very weak. As I was walking around looking for things, I stood with both feet on the plasterboard and fell through the ceiling. I landed on the stairs, along with a lot of plasterboard and insulation.

In pain and feeling panicked, I phoned my mum. The first thing she reminded me of was that I can't fall out of God's love, and that I am still just as much God's perfect expression as I was five minutes ago. We talked for a little while, and I knew I needed to go back to that passage from *Science and Health* that had come to me earlier. The key line that struck me was "we pause,—wait on God. Then we push onward, until boundless thought walks enraptured." To me, this meant I needed to give everything over to God, because He is all-powerful and ever present. I knew I would stop feeling burdened if, instead of shouldering things on my own, I paused and let God guide me through each task.

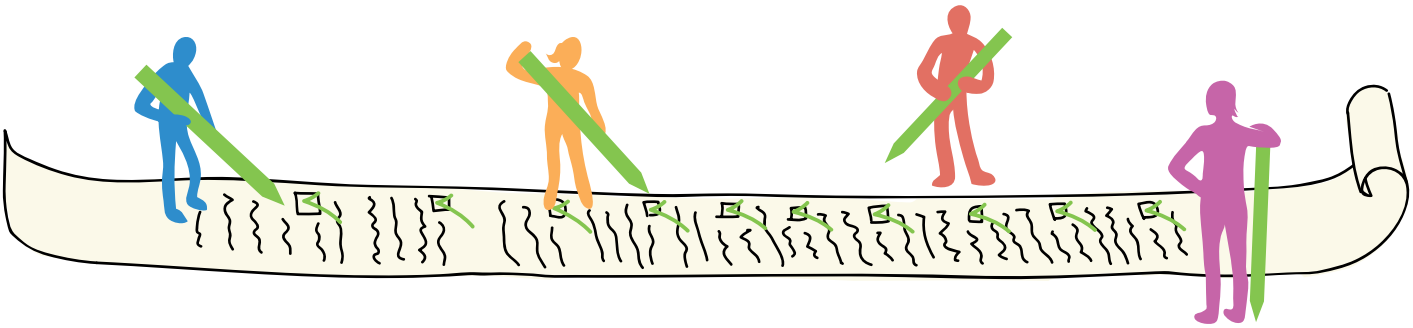
I decided to listen to that week's Bible Lesson. It felt so perfect—as though it had been put together specifically for this moment in my life. When listening to another passage, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32), I realized it was that simple. All I needed to know was the truth about myself. I know the truth is that I am spiritual, not material, because God is Spirit and He made me in His image. I could not be impressed by or believe in anything that argued I wasn't spiritual—such as an accident—or that suggested I wouldn't be able to attend or enjoy camp.

Over the next two days, I kept my focus on God, divine Love, as I prayed. What helped me to do this was that I was so overjoyed by how much love I felt from friends, family, and coworkers. For example, I had asked my friend's dad, who was a

plasterer, if he could fix the broken ceiling, and he offered to fix it for next to no charge. I also felt the love and prayers of those around me and that helped, too.

By the second day after the incident, I was completely healed and free from all pain. I was able to clean things up and put the ladders away without fear or discomfort. And I even completed all the tasks I had on my list!

Camp was a huge success, and I had so much fun soaking up the atmosphere, which I knew was Love expressed. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Originally published in the January 26, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Are some people evil?

Jenny Sawyer

"I KNOW THERE ARE good people in the world," the high school student told me. "It's just that now I know there are evil people, too."

Yes, his regular diet of TikTok content showcasing tyranny and brutality from every corner of the world had helped forge this perception. But it wasn't just that, he said. All he had to do was look around his community to see the same things playing out on a smaller scale.

Maybe you've felt the same way about this good/evil divide. It's not like the evidence isn't there, right before our eyes. But even in the conversation with this student, there was something that offered a glimmer of hope. His tone told me that some part of him wanted to be proven wrong. He wanted to have faith that there's at least some good in every single one of us.

That's a role Christian Science has played in my life when I've been wrestling with tough questions. By turning me toward God, it's helped prove that my own take on things isn't necessarily accurate. This isn't always easy to accept, because it seems to clash with one or more compelling narratives in my life or on my phone. And yet, when I do accept this divine perspective, good turns out to be the real deal, the only power—yes, even in people who before may have seemed like bullies, tyrants, and enemies.

That's what I was thinking about during this conversation about "evil people." I was thinking of a time when a friend who's a high school teacher asked me to pray because there was a volatile, potentially dangerous situation building to a head in her classroom. A group of students seemed on the brink of taking control of the class. She was scared—and, honestly, after hearing her story, so was I.

In the past, whenever I've felt afraid or helpless, the best, most healing solutions have always come when I've asked God to show me what He knows—what's real. One of the names the Bible gives to God is Truth, and I've always loved this name

because it tells me that if I want the actual truth and not just my own or someone else's perspective, God, Truth itself, is the only place to get it. Likewise, God is Love. This was especially comforting in this situation because Love felt like an answer to danger, fear, and potential violence.

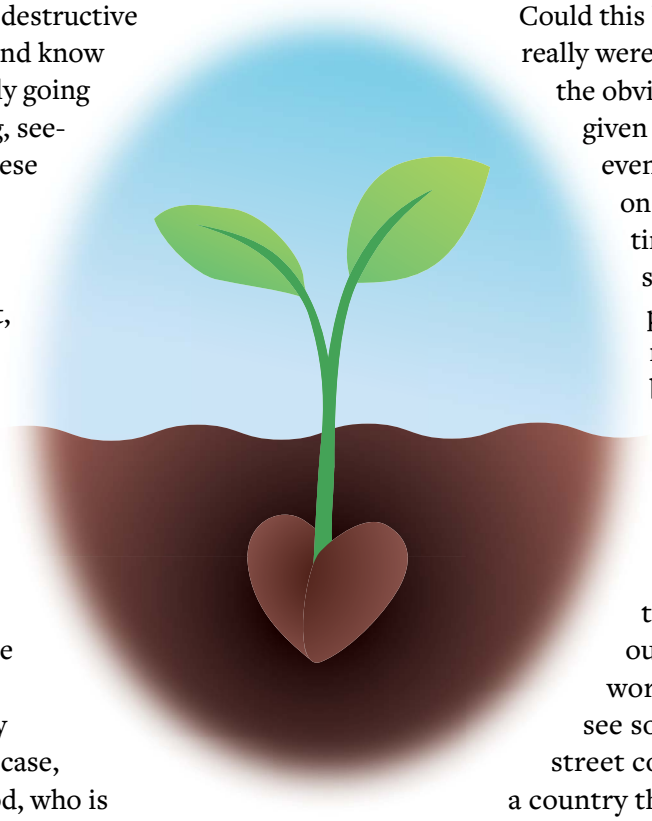
I turned to God, to Love and Truth, with my whole heart and asked for help. I wanted to see beyond the appearance of destructive people or evil intentions and know more about what was really going on. What was God causing, seeing, and knowing about these students?

Immediately, this thought—and actually it was deeper than a thought, because it came as a feeling in my heart, too—bubbled up: "They *want* to be good."

I knew in a way that was undeniable that this was true. Good feels like home. It is the most natural thing to each of us—the "true north" to which our internal compass naturally swings. This has to be the case, because we come from God, who is pure good. Good can create and cause *only* good. Good must flow out from good the way light has to flow out from the sun, simply because of the nature of its source.

I could see how my previous perspective, compelling though it had seemed, simply couldn't be correct, since these teens weren't self-determining individuals who could choose between being good and being bad. Each of them was a son or daughter of God and was *only* good, just like their Father-Mother.

And this proved to be true. The situation in my friend's classroom turned around immediately. The bullying, threats, and power struggle stopped. One student even apologized.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Could this have happened if there really were "evil people"? To state the obvious: No. And that's what's given me the conviction that even now, with all that's going on in the world, I can continue to rest solidly on the same truth that brought peace to my friend's classroom: *Everyone* wants to be good because, in reality, everyone *is* good.

And when it doesn't seem like it? That's when we can be the witnesses, the pray-ers, the spiritual seers that our communities and the world need. Whether we see something on our own street corner or on a video from a country thousands of miles away, we can play a part in standing for, and drawing out, good. We can ask God to show us the goodness inherent in each of us and allow our trust in good to expand until we truly know that that's all there is and that's who we really are. Not evil. Good.

All of us.●

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Notes

If your crush doesn't like you back

Owen Thomas

I WAS IN LOVE. But there was a problem. Three other guys also liked this girl, and she couldn't seem to make up her mind among us. She was overwhelmed by all the attention. I was in agony. How could I get her to like me more?

As I thought about my sad situation one evening, it occurred to me that I could pray about it. I'd grown up going to Christian Science Sunday School, where I'd learned how to pray—though mostly, up to this point, my parents or a Christian Science practitioner had prayed on my behalf. This time, I figured I should try praying on my own.

I reached for a copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the textbook of Christian Science, written by Mary Baker Eddy. I turned to the first chapter, titled "Prayer," to the place where Mrs. Eddy gives her spiritual interpretation of the Lord's Prayer from the Bible (see pp. 16–17). I read it over slowly a few times.

Nothing. I closed the book.

Now what?

I closed my eyes and silently, earnestly asked God to help me.

Almost immediately, I heard a thought from God. It was so clear that it sounded like a voice. "*Love is reflected in love*," it said, which was a snippet from the prayer I'd just been reading in *Science and Health*.

I'd never gotten an answer to prayer so quickly and definitively before. What it said to me was that divine Love, which is a biblical name for God, is always expressed in our experience. Love with a capital *L* refers to God, the infinite source of all real love, which is "impartial and universal" (*Science and Health*, p. 13). Love with a lowercase *l* is what is expressed in our lives.

Divine Love always blesses, and it can—and does—heal. It is unselfish, freeing, and redeeming. But our own sense of love, if it isn't spiritually based, can be selfish, obsessive, possessive. Human love shouldn't be discarded, though. We should strive to lift it up and purify it through understanding God as Love, so that it approaches the divine ideal. That's the kind of love I was being urged to express. I didn't need to figure out how to make myself more lovable; I needed to be more loving. And if I were expressing that higher, more spiritual sense of love, this girl would *have* to reflect that love back to me. That was divine law—right?

After this awesome answer to my prayer, I thought for sure this girl would fall into my arms.

She did not.

But something unexpected happened. It seemed right to tell one of my "rivals" about my experience. He was a fellow Christian Scientist, a casual friend, and we'd even joked about our shared predicament. At the time, he was deeply discouraged about his relationship with this girl, and he seemed to take my inspiration to heart. Years later, he told me that he'd been profoundly moved by the unselfishness of my reaching out, when he was, after all, a competitor.

This sharing deepened and strengthened our friendship. It led to many more conversations about Christian Science and its role in our lives. While our crushes on the girl faded, our friendship endured. This was Love being reflected in love.

I had much more to learn about love—in high school and beyond. And while I don't wish on anyone the emotional anguish of unrequited love, for me, it became an opportunity for prayer—prayer that was answered with a life lesson about the law of Love.

If you're struggling with the concept of love, you can turn confidently to God. I am still in awe of that timely "angel" message that led to my realization that I am always, and ever have been, in Love. ●

Originally published in the February 9, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Healing the winter blahs

Paige Bradley

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED SUMMERTIME. But as school started up and the weather cooled, I used to dread the approach of winter.

During wintertime, I struggled to feel motivated and joyful. I also felt a lack of purpose and faced challenges to my well-being. For several years, I tried different methods to overcome this, but nothing ever lasted. Being a lifelong Christian Scientist, I have had many meaningful healings that have consistently shown me that turning to God is effective and transformative. And because of this, I finally realized that prayer was the most natural and necessary way to permanently deal with the winter blahs.

One winter, I was wrestling with this negative seasonal pattern when something we read in my Bible class at school struck me. We were studying the Apostle Paul, whose three missionary journeys as recounted in the New Testament were marked by beatings, ridicule, and imprisonment. Despite these hardships, Paul never abandoned his mission because he understood the importance of what he was doing. I reflected on this contrast: Here I was, allowing the weather to derail my sense of purpose, while Paul persevered through genuine persecution.

> **Prayer was the most natural way to permanently deal with the winter blahs.**



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

For class, we often memorized Bible verses. One was from a letter Paul wrote to some early Christians: "You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober" (I Thessalonians 5:5–6, New International Version).

Even though feeling purpose and motivation was challenging, I realized I could draw inspiration from Paul's sense of duty and spiritual hope. The idea that I could be a light to the world was exactly what I needed to pull me out of this slump. Because we are all made in God's image, I knew that I, too, am the expression of God's qualities, including joy and purpose, and that that's what it means to be a light. This truth transcends seasonal conditions.

In Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth, he writes: "For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:16–17, Modern English Version).

These ideas became particularly meaningful during difficult winter days. They reminded me that my identity isn't defined by the darkness of a season or by any struggle that I might face.

Instead, my identity, which is totally spiritual, is permanently good—like God, Spirit. This encouraged me to stay alert to negative thoughts and turn to God for spiritual hope when I felt pulled in the opposite direction.

Paul's words reminded me that my seasonal struggles were temporary—"but for a moment"—while the spiritual growth and strength I was gaining would have lasting significance. Feeling weary and unmotivated was not part of my identity. The "inward man," my spiritual identity, includes renewal and strength.

I found comfort in Paul's story because his unwavering trust in God enabled him to endure terrible experiences. And understanding Paul's perseverance helped me approach the seasons differently. Instead of feeling weighed down by the darkness or sluggishness of winter, I began to see it as an opportunity to practice the spiritual strength Paul describes in his letters.

As the weather has gotten colder this year, I've found real comfort in the understanding of God's infinite joy and in my God-given ability to express that joy. Prayer has helped me stay grounded in recognizing my purpose as God's reflection.

I'm grateful to have learned that, regardless of the season, we are all, always, children of light. ●

Originally published in the February 16, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Will I have to study all night?

Molly Richardson Jerry



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THE SUMMER BEFORE MY junior year of high school was filled with horror stories. Friends who were now seniors kept telling me how difficult my classes were going to be and how they'd had to pull all-nighters to finish all the homework teachers had assigned. That did not sound like the kind of year I wanted to have.

To be honest, I did spend some of my summer worrying. But I also spent time praying—asking God to help me with whatever challenges I might face in the year ahead. I wanted to do well in school, but I also didn't want to have to stay up all night studying!

When I raised the issue with my Christian Science Sunday School teacher, she suggested that I look at the upcoming year from a different perspective. Instead of praying to get all *A*s, I could see my schoolwork as a way to glorify God.

It can often seem like school is all about *our* efforts and how well *we're* doing, so this would be a shift in approach for me. Instead of focusing on my personal efforts, I could see the upcoming year as an opportunity to demonstrate all the gifts God has so freely given me and all of my classmates.

My Sunday School teacher went on to explain that in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy tells us that another name for God is Mind and that we are God's—Mind's—creation. Well then, I reasoned, I can glorify Mind by demonstrating intelligence and wisdom in everything I do. God is infinite good, so I could find unlimited ways to show this in my life, including in school and studying.

I also thought about the fact that, while keeping up with homework often means working hard, God's intelligence doesn't need all-nighters to be expressed; it is always present and immediate. My Sunday School teacher directed me to a part of *Science and Health* that defines *Mind* as God, "of whom man is the full and perfect expression" (p. 591). I could see how this meant that I couldn't be limited in any way.

Armed with these good thoughts, I started my junior year excited to tackle the challenges ahead. But as the months passed, the workload increased, and I forgot some of the ideas I had prayed with over the summer. I began to feel that in order to keep up with the mountains of homework for all my classes, I had to study many hours each night, without time for much else.

I stuck pretty rigidly to a rigorous study schedule, until one afternoon when a friend told me she was having a hard time. She asked if she could come over after school so we could talk. At

first, I hesitated, thinking of all the homework I had to finish that night and a history test I had to study for. But thankfully, I could feel God guiding me to answer, "Of course you can come over." Another friend joined us as well. We hung out until fairly late in the evening, talking and laughing. By the time they left, we all felt a little lighter.

We had spent a little time looking over our history notes together. But I was tempted to think I hadn't put in an adequate number of study hours and that I might have to stay up late. Again, a very clear sense came to me, which I knew was from God, that nothing more needed to be done. God didn't need a certain number of hours of study in order to be expressed. I went to bed—and ended up scoring 100 percent on the next day's history test—my only perfect score of the year.

Letting God take the lead rather than rigidly sticking to my own ideas of how to study was a turning point for me that year. It showed me how to trust God with everything I needed to do and not be inflexibly tied to an hours-long homework schedule. I approached the remainder of junior year in a more balanced way and did well in all my classes, while also maintaining friendships and participating in sports. I never once had to pull an all-nighter!

I was very grateful to God for giving me this needed reminder, which I have referred back to many times in my life, whenever I have been tempted to hold on to my to-do lists instead of what God is leading me to do. ●

Originally published in the February 23, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

When we found ourselves in the middle of a protest

Anna Paulson

LAST SUMMER, I TRAVELED to Kenya with a group of other young Christian Scientists.

Our group worked diligently to prepare for the trip. We held fundraisers to make the journey possible, but more importantly, we spent time in prayer and spiritual study, grounding our purpose and motives for the trip in God, who is divine Love.

The theme for our trip was a statement from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "Giving does not impoverish us in the service of our Maker, neither does withholding enrich us" (p. 79).

I carried this idea with me throughout the trip, especially when we went to serve at a local school in Migori, a rural area.

When we first arrived in Kenya, everything went smoothly. We were joyfully shopping in the capital for games and gifts. But not long after that, civil unrest broke out. Protests erupted across the city. The parliament building was set on fire, and the streets were filled with angry crowds shouting at foreigners and anyone they perceived as having opposing views. It was intense and scary.

Fortunately, our travel plans had us leaving for Migori. But we found that protests were happening there as well. Our chaperones hired police and private escorts, and we often traveled early in the morning before protests started for the day. We also had a local guide we felt safe with. But at one point, some protesters circled our vehicles—jumping on the sides of the vans, yelling harsh things, and pressing their faces and hands against the windows.

Despite the chaos around us, though, something remarkable happened within our group. There was a tangible stillness inside the van. The students, our trip leaders, and a Christian Science practitioner who was accompanying us all turned to God, united in the truth that God's presence was surrounding and protecting us. We began to sing hymns from the *Christian Science Hymnal*. One hymn stood out to me. The opening verse says,

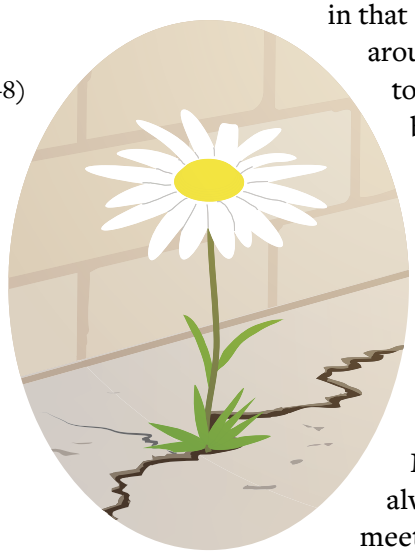
> The storm may roar without me,
> My heart may low be laid;
> But God is round about me,
> And can I be dismayed?
> (Anna L. Waring, alt., No. 148)

This line especially stayed with me: "God is round about me." At that moment, I felt that it was more than just a comforting idea; I knew it was a spiritual fact. No disturbance can touch the peace that comes from divine Love.

As we continued driving through the streets, my perception began to shift. Instead of focusing on fear, I started to see the good around us: a little girl playing with a cat, a man happily strumming his guitar, a family sharing their food by the roadside. The more I looked, the more I realized that good was all around us. It had never left; it had just momentarily been hidden by fear.

Through practicing Christian Science, I have learned to look beyond the picture in front of me and behold the spiritual reality or truth—God's harmonious creation. That day, I saw clearly that divine Love was present and active, even in what seemed like a dangerous situation. God, our ever-present help in trouble, was truly our protector and guide.

As we continued to sing and remain steadfast in that spiritual awareness, the atmosphere around us changed. The crowds began to part. People stepped away from our bus. The shouting quieted. And we were allowed to pass peacefully.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

This experience reminded me of the importance of holding to spiritual truth, even when circumstances appear scary or disorderly. God's presence is not theoretical; it's real, powerful, and always with us. And, as Mrs. Eddy wrote, "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (*Science and Health*, p. 494).

Love really did uphold and protect us all—and I know it always will. ●

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Notes

Feeling stuck on a presentation?

Anna-Zoë Herr

WHEN I WAS INVITED to speak at a conference in the Netherlands to present the early findings of my doctoral thesis, it felt like an important part of my career. So I diligently worked on my presentation for three weeks, feeling increasingly tense as the date approached.

I'd always thought of myself as a confident presenter, but I was flustered the night before I traveled to the Netherlands. I realized that my presentation was complicated, too long, and didn't have a central idea. I was so scared of not phenomenally impressing my audience that I was embarrassed about what I'd produced.

When I started to panic, I realized that I needed to step away from my computer. Having little time left to make changes and feeling mentally spent, I knew it was time to pray. As a student of Christian Science, I've seen how, when I've felt this way in the past, turning to God has always brought calm and direction. I knew that this time wouldn't be an exception.

> **I realized that my presentation was complicated, too long, and didn't have a central idea.**

It occurred to me that I had been trapped in my own concept of being a good speaker and presenter—that I considered myself to be the source of this talent. I felt God was nudging me to see how much larger and expansive life is when I don't outline it through the smallness of my own perspective.

In the book of Exodus in the Bible, Moses doubted his capacity to speak convincingly and lead the Israelites out of slavery (see 4:1–12, 28–31). I had thought Moses' capacity was his own, so it was a big relief to learn through Christian Science that God was actually the source and Moses the expression. Relying on God, Moses successfully led the Israelites out of captivity. This helped me understand that any concept of ourselves that's wrapped up in either pride or self-deprecation misses out on seeing the full expression of God in our lives.

As I thought about this, I felt increasingly humbled and receptive and began to rethink my motive for presenting my research at the conference. I realized that my real reason for being there was to express divine Love, God, not to impress the audience. I asked God to lead me in editing or re-envisioning my presentation so that it could benefit whoever would hear it.

Next, my perspective was gently shifted to see that God, as infinite Mind, divine intelligence, has been the animating power behind my career, including my research for my thesis and every other step of this journey. God would continue to be the pilot of my life—not me. So I opened a new PowerPoint file and said, "OK, God. This is all You. Tell me what to put in here."

I started to pace in my apartment and waited. I told myself that I would listen for guidance on each individual slide until it came—even if I had to walk up and down in my apartment the whole night.

After a few steps, ideas for the first two slides and a creative new beginning popped into my head. I sat down to write and then paced again until the next idea came. Within about twenty minutes, I had a complete presentation that was interactive and representative of my research. It also had a core idea, a graceful flow, and a beginning and an end. When I ran through the presentation, it met the exact time limit needed for the conference.

I was in awe. I felt so exhilarated and humbled.

The presentation at the conference went incredibly well, and has been a template I have used for other presentations. And this experience reminded me of the essential truth that God is the *only* source of our intelligence and creativity. When we realize that God is the source, academics

and all other activities become more fulfilling, creative, interesting, and effortless.

I've come to think of this experience in relation to something a Christian Science practitioner once shared with me. Imagine you are sitting in a car in a big city with high-rise buildings all around. You really want to go to a specific place, but it's hard to see how to get there. Now imagine that you are on the phone with a dear friend who is standing on top of one of those buildings and can see all the way to your destination. Your friend might recommend, "Turn right now, and then make a left." Even though that might not make sense, based on your own view of the road, you know your friend has the whole picture and can guide you there via the best, quickest route possible.

> **When we realize that God is the source of our intelligence, academics and other activities become more effortless.**

You probably have figured out by now that in this analogy, your friend is God, and how fast and well you get to your destination depends, in part, on how much trust you put in your friend's perspective.

Humility is powerful because it allows us to give up a limited view and accept divine direction. Then, instead of feeling that we need to accumulate talents or strive to become "someone," we find that we are already a whole and capable "someone" because divine Love made us so. ●



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Notes

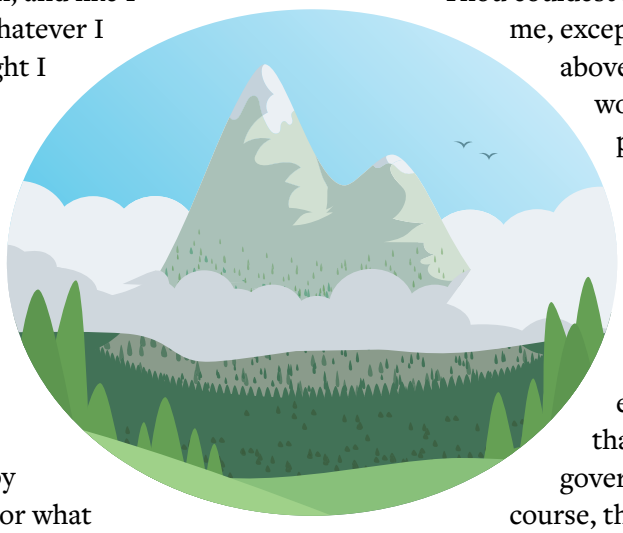
How can I stop being influenced by what other people think?

John Biggs

Q: How can I stop being influenced by what my friends and others are thinking?

A: Throughout middle school, high school, and even most of college, I struggled with this very thing. It wasn't so much peer pressure as this overwhelming feeling that I needed to follow what my friends thought. Like if there was a girl I thought was cute, but my friends didn't like her (or, more honestly, if I *thought* my friends *wouldn't* like her), then there was no way I would consider talking to her.

I felt like two different people. When I was at home with just my family and maybe one or two friends around, I felt free and happy to be myself. But at school, I felt boxed in, and like I was trying to conform to whatever I thought other people thought I should be.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

At the beginning of my fourth year in college, I had the opportunity to study abroad in France. I was very caught up in relationship challenges, fears about my prospects, and my dislike of school, and I was feeling trapped. I was trying to navigate life by what other people thought or what their expectations of me might be.

But one day in France, I had a transformational experience, which you can read about on JSH-Online.com (see "An always present Love," *The Christian Science Journal*, September 2010). As detailed in that article, I felt the immediacy of God's love in a way I'd never felt it before. The funny thing was, it didn't specifically answer any of the concerns or questions I'd had. But it shifted the entire premise of my outlook. I saw, for the first time, that my life was my own and that it was not at the mercy of what other people thought, did, or expected. Or, to be more accurate, spiritually, I saw that my life was God's and that it was safe in His love.

The shift that came from this realization was tremendous. I felt free! I'd had no idea how hard it had been to navigate all those different influences, but now that I was feeling so sure of God's love, I saw that it was the only thing I wanted to let govern me. And indeed, God, Love, is the only true power that governs any of us.

I'm reminded of how Christ Jesus responded when Pontius Pilate threatened him. Jesus said, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11). In other words, "You could have no power over me at all, unless God gave you that power."

Well, nothing against any of my friends, but God sure didn't put me in their hands. And, honestly, my friendships deepened quite a bit, once I saw that these friends were not governors of my life—which, of course, they probably never intended to be. But their good ideas could definitely inspire me as I figured out what was right for me.

Before, I'd felt I was constantly trying to adjust to what others might think on any given day, which can be like trying to follow trends that seem to change from moment to moment. But as I discovered that God's love is steady, not reactive to this person or that circumstance, there was a new steadiness that characterized my approach.

While Love does govern us fully, sometimes we might not be sure how to see that in our lives. For me, it's helpful to look at each day as an opportunity to feel and trust God's love more fully. His love doesn't waver, doesn't depend on the circumstances around us. God's guidance never has exceptions. Watching and listening for Love, we'll be less and less likely to give in to an influence that doesn't coincide with Love and the good it has for us and for all. This verse in the Bible encourages us: "Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is" (I John 3:2, Common English Bible).

We may not be sure of each coming step or how our lives will grow and transform. But looking to God, recognizing Love as the sole power in our lives, we'll discover that there's no need to conform to what others think in order to feel loved, because we are already loved, already complete as Love's reflection. ●

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Want to pray for the world? Start here.

Jenny Sawyer

I WAS THINKING ABOUT the war in Iran when I asked my Christian Science Sunday School students this question: "Do you see yourself as capable of healing the way Jesus did?"

One made a face that summed up everyone's feelings, and we all laughed. It was a face that said, "Um, hardly."

But we agreed: It was a question that was worth thinking about. Especially since Jesus told us that we could heal the way he did—and do even greater works. Could that include having a healing impact on what happens when a war breaks out?

Christ Jesus wasn't overwhelmed by the big problems he faced—and was even able to heal them—for two reasons. First, he knew what God is. And second, he knew who he was as the Son of God. With this understanding, nothing could stop him. Similarly, the issue for us is whether we're starting our prayers from this standpoint: fully aware of what God is, and fully embracing who we are as His children.

Our class felt pretty confident about knowing what God is. Two books we learn from in Sunday School—the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy—tell us everything we need to know about God's nature. God is infinite Love, the all-knowing Mind. God is omnipotence, omnipresence. And God is both good and All—meaning there's no place or space for anything harmful, oppressive, or bad.

Prayer helps us understand God in a way that makes us so sure of His goodness that it replaces any fear or worry that something bad could exist. But sometimes, before we can even get there, anxiety or disbelief creeps in and says, "Yeah, but who am *I* to think I could pray effectively enough that my prayer can make a difference here?" That's when it helps to know what it means to be God's child.

I was praying about this later, because I realized that "God's child" felt like just words to me. And as I prayed, it was like my thoughts were a room where the lights were going from low and dim to full and bright.

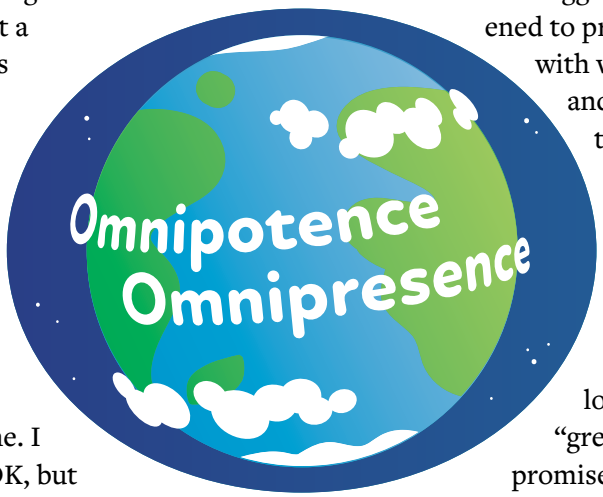
God showed me how a really little child learns everything about who they are from their parents.

All he or she knows about their identity comes from Mom and Dad. This was spiritually significant because it showed me that what we think of ourselves—as capable or not—is completely irrelevant. It's only what God, our divine Father-Mother, knows of us that could be real or true. God sees us as He made us: reflecting clarity, compassion, insight, and strength.

> **Jesus told us that we could heal the way he did—and do even greater works. Could that include having a healing impact on what happens when a war breaks out?**

God also showed me that a child relies completely on his or her parents. Doesn't feel responsible. Gets to be the recipient of goodness and love—doesn't have to create them. This helped me not feel overwhelmed about praying for the world, because I got it that my job was to see what God has already done for everyone. I didn't have to make things OK, but accept that the Father-Mother of all of us was the One maintaining, protecting, and loving His whole creation.

Feeling in such a new, convincing way who I am turned out to be a big boost for my prayers.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

In the days that have followed, I've noticed how I feel equipped to deal with problems, big and small, that come up in my own life. In fact, at one point when I faced a disturbing issue that seemed like it didn't have a solution, I responded almost automatically by remembering that I'm a child of God—and all that implies. To my surprise, I felt what I can only describe as the peace of God's presence—and then got an immediate idea that showed me exactly how to solve the problem.

My prayers about the war in Iran have also been strengthened. I've needed to be consistent about praying; it seems like there are distressing details to confront each day. But seeing the results I've had in my own life, I know I'm able to pray about these bigger things, too. I feel strengthened to pray more broadly by starting with who I really am spiritually and understanding that from there, I am free to expect the same immediacy of God's power, and its healing effects for all of us, that Jesus showed us through his healings.

We may feel we have a long way to go in doing those "greater works" that Jesus promised we would do, and bringing healing to the world. But knowing we have a place to start—and then starting? That has to make a difference: for the conflict in Iran, and for any other problem to which we want to bring healing. ●

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Notes

How to get over a grudge

Bailey Gordon



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

ONE OF MY FRIENDS had hurt my feelings. It had happened a few months before, and though I knew I should have let go of what she'd said, I was struggling so much to get over it. Now I was on a trip with a group of my friends, and she was there.

I didn't want to hold on to a grudge, but every little thing she did seemed to annoy me so much. And the more things she did, the stronger the grudge became. It got to a point where I started sitting out on some of the activities just because she was participating.

A few days in, I realized that she was also not feeling very happy toward me. The tension between us was ruining the whole trip.

At first, I tried working through it on my own. For example, trying to occupy my thoughts with other things, talking with other people about how angry I was, ignoring her. None of it worked.

One night, I found I couldn't sleep. I was so full of anger that it was overcoming me. I tossed and turned, getting no closer to any kind of peace or calm. I got up and went to talk to the Christian Science practitioner who was with us. A practitioner's job is to help you see things more spiritually, so I thought going to her would help me see this girl's spiritual nature and mine, as well as our innocence and our ability to love.

I couldn't help bursting into tears as I told the practitioner what was going on. I had been trying so hard to let go of all the hatred, anger, and hurt, but it just seemed like I couldn't.

The practitioner told me that I could "give it up to God"—in other words, trust God to help and comfort me, rather than thinking I had to do it on my own. This reminded me of a Bible passage I'd heard a lot but had never really connected with: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28, 30). These are Jesus' words, and even though he faced lots of people who were cruel to him during his life, instead of feeling burdened by their behavior, he responded with love. If he could say this, I knew that I could let go of hatred and find a way to love, too.

I realized that this grudge was only dragging me down, and I could let go of it for a spiritual perspective. Since that still seemed hard, I looked to Jesus' example for inspiration again. As Jesus knew he was going to be crucified—a torturous death—he prayed and talked to God, asking if he could avoid this experience if at all possible. But in this moment of trial, he still said this as he prayed: "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

I realized that I needed to lean on God the way Jesus had. As it says in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, "Truth not error, Love not hate, Spirit not matter, governs man" (p. 420).

I realized I was letting the error of seeing this girl incorrectly, and hatred because of the way she'd acted, govern my life. But the truth of Love's power was right there. I just needed to open my eyes to it.

With this realization, I felt so much lighter. I could see how all the negative feelings that had seemed so justified before didn't come from God, so they couldn't be part of me. I could let them all go and see both this girl and myself as children of God—lovable and loving.

Very quickly, the tension and negativity drained away, and we started being friends again. I'm so grateful for what I've learned about the power of Love to erase a grudge. ●

Originally published in the March 30, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

No more cat allergies

Jonathon King

WE WERE GOING ON a road trip! My family was driving from Washington state to California to drop me off for a trip I was taking with a group of other Christian Scientists.

I was excited to see more of the United States. We stopped several times to enjoy the Washington scenery, including mountains, rivers, and forests, before continuing on.

For our final stop, we went to San Francisco, where we stayed at my relatives' house. San Francisco was my favorite stop. After a long day of sightseeing, we went back to my relatives', where we had a wonderful dinner. Unfortunately, although they were sweet hosts and the day had been fun, I encountered a problem later that night.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Ever since I was little, I'd had an allergic reaction to cats. One of my friends has cats, and whenever I would go to his house, I'd get super congested, and my eyes would itch. So when I learned that we'd be staying in the guest house, where a cat was also staying, I was not thrilled.

The first part of the night was pretty miserable. I was lying in bed, tossing and turning, unable to fall asleep because of the allergy symptoms.

Then I thought of an idea from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. This is a book that's helped me find healing in the past, so when this statement came to mind, I paid attention. Growing up, I'd heard my family share this quote, and I felt that it applied to my situation now. It says, "All of God's creatures, moving in the harmony of Science, are harmless, useful, indestructible" (p. 514).

It got me thinking about how cats are God's creatures, harmless and incapable of interrupting God's goodness or our ability to experience that goodness. Our relation to God is like how a ray of light emanates from the sun or a drop of water is a part of the ocean. God is infinite good, and we can't get outside of that. God's goodness is all around us. It includes cats and all other creatures.

As my thoughts about cats shifted from fear and dislike to a love for and amazement at God's creation, there was an instant change in my body. I went from struggling to breathe through my nose to being able to breathe without a problem.

I rejoiced in my healing and was able to fall asleep in minutes. Since this experience, I haven't had any allergic reactions to cats. Recently, I stayed with someone who owns a cat, and I didn't have any issues.

This healing was the perfect end to our road trip! ●

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Not just one healing, but two!

Phoebe Fogarty



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FOR THE BETTER PART of this past school year, I was often sick.

It wasn't anything too serious, but discomfort in the form of congestion and related issues began to interfere with my everyday life. I had never experienced anything like this before and felt led to turn to prayer. My parents were aware of what I was going through, and although I didn't ask them to pray for me, my mom is always very supportive of healing through prayer. So I knew she was supporting my progress during this time.

Though I had decided to pray, I wasn't quite sure where to begin. I attend Christian Science Sunday School each week, so I began collecting notes I'd taken during our conversations in class as well as citations from the Bible and from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that stood out to me. By the end of the school year, I had a full list of helpful ideas on my notes app.

I prayed with the idea from the Bible that God is the only cause and creator, and that God, who is Spirit, creates and animates all that is real and good, including me.

One Bible verse that really resonated with me during this time comes at the end of a passage describing God's goodness to His creation and says, "Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" (Psalms 107:43, New King James Version). To me, this means that if you look for the good, you can find it in every part of life because God is good and is Life itself. After reading this, I focused on observing the good things around me and expressing gratitude for them because I knew they were expressions of God's love.

As I continued going to Sunday School and praying with these ideas, I began to see improvement. But I still wanted complete healing.

Then one day, I heard something on the Christian Science Daily Lift podcast that resonated with me. The general idea of the episode was that a physical issue points to something we haven't addressed mentally, since everything we deal with is a thought that's being expressed in an outward form. I realized that I had been focused only on a physical resolution, when what I really needed to pray about was a mistaken thought.

This insight invigorated me. I realized that, rather than trying to fix a physical condition, I needed to correct whatever thought was behind it, which I knew would happen as I learned more about God.

Soon after, I headed off to a camp for Christian Scientists. I was excited to go because, for me, camp is a great place to learn new ideas about God, and I knew my summer would be full of spiritual uplift and inspiration.

About a week and a half into camp, during a camp testimony meeting—an hour-long church meeting with opportunities to share healings—I was thinking about a testimony I might share. That was when I realized I had been healed: My sinuses were clear, and I wasn't coughing anymore. All the discomfort was gone. I was so happy and grateful to God.

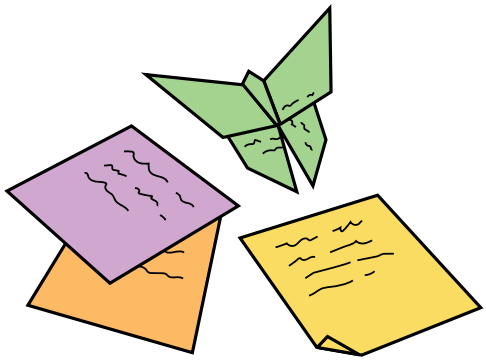
I also noticed that another long-standing issue had been resolved, too. For a couple of years leading up to this, I'd had eczema. As I mentally retraced my steps, I realized that when I'd first started praying about feeling ill, the discoloration and skin dryness from the eczema had disappeared. I hadn't prayed about the eczema, but the spiritual uplift in my thoughts had met all my needs.

I learned a lot about myself and God through this experience, and I'm so grateful for both these healings. ●

Originally published in the April 13, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

A spiritual response to feeling overwhelmed

Amarachi Ejimadu



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

AT ONE POINT IN my college semester, academic demands—combined with leadership responsibilities, work, athletics, and family—became overwhelming.

I enjoy pushing myself and keeping busy, while still prioritizing my academics. But when my academic performance suddenly wasn't meeting my expectations, I began to panic. I had papers to write, finals to prepare for, and numerous assignments to complete, all within a few weeks. And with the semester nearing its end, I knew asking for extensions was not an option.

At first, I felt I had no choice but to push through. But then I realized I could do what I have always done when life feels overwhelming: pray. I've learned from attending Christian Science Sunday School that prayer is something effective I can turn to during a challenge.

While praying, I realized that nothing is truly in my control and that instead, there is a divine power governing all things. God is that power, and God is all good, so that means good is governing everything.

I knew that my initial impulses about how to solve things on my own had failed me. They'd told me to keep stressing, stay awake late into the night, and keep pushing hard instead of sleeping. But knowing I could trust God silenced that negative, unproductive thinking. Yielding to God brought me joy and peace. Most importantly, it reassured me that everything would be fine, because when I've trusted God in the past, things have always worked out.

With that realization, I was able to let go of a lot of the pressure I'd been feeling. I found comfort in singing hymns from the *Christian Science Hymnal* and listening to streamed Christian Science church services, as well as the Christian Science Daily Lift and *Sentinel* Watch podcasts.

For example, one night when I couldn't sleep, I listened to an episode of the Daily Lift and then started praying. In moments like these, when I'm quietly praying, I often receive a message from God that I reflect on—pray with—and it stays with me. This time, the message was the word *patience*.

At first, I thought that was strange. How could I be patient when time seemed to be moving faster than my ability to complete my tasks? Still, I accepted the message and said, "Thank you, God, for this reminder." I trusted that this feeling of pressure would pass and that these tasks would get completed as I relied on God. I knew that I could be patient and find joy in the process.

Even so, I wasn't immediately sure how to practice patience, so I turned to giving gratitude as a way of being patient with what was getting done instead of focusing on a long, overwhelming to-do list. Every morning and night, I thanked God for every completed task and for those who were supporting me. I noticed small accomplishments and was grateful for them, and I knew that what had gotten done that day was enough. I didn't have to be impatient about the rest.

Turning to gratitude restored my joyful demeanor. Even when circumstances felt out of control, I remained at peace, and I even started to enjoy what I was doing. I began completing tasks more efficiently and finished the semester successfully, having fulfilled all my responsibilities.

Patience, expressed through gratitude for the small things, became my reminder that there is joy in the process and that I can trust God when life feels out of control.

Thank you, God! ●

Originally published in the April 20, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Angry at a friend? Love is here to help.

Grace Ott Anderson

I WAS MAD AT my friend Maya. She didn't come to my party, and I felt snubbed and embarrassed.

All weekend, I kept replaying the incident in my mind—feeding the fire of grievance and reminding myself that I had every right to be mad.

I was acting like Jonah in the Bible. Jonah was furious with God for showing mercy to the Ninevites—a group of people that he didn't believe deserved God's forgiveness. He plunked himself down in the hot sun to pout (see Jonah 4:1–11). He basically said to God, "I'd rather die than forgive!" God grew a leafy tree to shade Jonah where he was sulking in the heat. I love this example of God's unfailing love, and the humorous way it unfolded.

Anyway, in a Jonah move, I skipped church that Sunday and rode my bike to a music festival alone. When I arrived, the main acts hadn't yet started. But six Tibetan monks were chanting in deep, low voices.

"Perfect," I thought. "Strangers chanting in a language I don't understand—I can nurse my grudge in peace!"

I lay down on a sunny patch of grass, closed my eyes, and thought some things about my friend that weren't the nicest—thoughts of self-righteousness and feelings of being wronged. But this kind of thinking keeps us focused on our grievances, among other things, and, as a Christian Scientist, I really did know better than to indulge in these unloving thoughts.

Suddenly, a shadow crossed my face. I opened my eyes, and there stood my friend!

It was Maya, shading my eyes from the bright sun. With her blonde hair illuminated and her brown eyes smiling, she looked like a tilting, friendly sunflower.

Suddenly, my anger lifted. I realized I didn't have to keep building my case against her. I felt the anger and resistance detach from me and wash away. It wasn't me doing it; it was the action of divine Love. I felt like I was seeing reality—who I was as God's expression and who she really was as God's, Love's, expression, too. Free from my commentary and projections.

Without a word, I stood and hugged her. My whole grievance had simply evaporated. No mental argument. No heroic effort. Just the warmth of Love, God, melting my defensive anger.

I'd done everything to resist this healing. But I knew better; I cherished an article published in Mary Baker Eddy's book *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* titled "Love" (pp. 249–250), which emphasizes the power of divine Love to heal and transform, even in the face of hatred and discord.



I knew that, as the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy had faced many periods of persecution, betrayal, and misrepresentation. That's why her teachings, like that article on Love, aren't theories; they're field-tested instructions for meeting injustice and hurt without violence, revenge, or retaliation.

So I understood what had happened that day. Even while I was stewing in resentment, God's love remained active—quietly, steadily moving me. That spiritual action dissolved my grievance and let me see Maya as God does: radiant, whole, and impossible not to love.

God's grace, flowing from Love's love for us, doesn't wait for us to be ready. It breaks through self-justification, fear, and stubbornness. It reaches every heart with no exceptions. The same Love that cared for Jonah and melted my resistance that afternoon is here for all of us: always active, unstoppable, and irresistibly healing. ●

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I never thought I could love my stepmother

Name Withheld

THE SUMMER BEFORE MY senior year in high school, my parents separated after a marriage of more than twenty-five years. They were soon divorced. This took me entirely by surprise, and my formerly idyllic life fell apart.

I became confused, extremely sad, and mad. I had not been raised in Christian Science and had never embraced my family's religion nor engaged much in their church's Sunday School, so I was ignorant of the Bible's teachings and had nothing to lean on during these traumatic years. I ended up dropping out of college after my sophomore year because I was so lost and couldn't focus on my studies. Suicide was often on my mind.

> "I am grateful to now have the opportunity to visit my stepmother as often as possible and to joyously express love, without reservation.

By this point, my dad had remarried, and the hatred I felt for my stepmother consumed me. Every family gathering was painful, and the suicidal thoughts were hard to ignore. After a crushing breakup of my own, I was devastated and at my lowest point. Finally, in desperation, I pleaded, "Please, God, help me to understand what love is!"

At that point of total humility, I started searching for answers. A couple of years later, after reading numerous self-help books, I was given my first copy of the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Before I'd reached page 100, I was instantaneously healed of a two-pack-a-day smoking habit that I'd had for ten years, so I knew that I'd found the truth. I was "all in," as the saying goes.

I began to learn that "God is love" (I John 4:8). I'll never forget the first time I read that. I was overjoyed! I started to have hope that I would finally learn what real love is. Family gatherings continued to be challenging, so I asked a Christian Science practitioner to pray for me during each one, with the expectation that I could be relieved of the torment of hate-filled thoughts.

Then I found the powerful, healing article near the beginning of Mrs. Eddy's *Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896* titled, "Love Your Enemies" (see pp. 8–13). It became my constant companion as I pondered what the article meant when it said that to love my enemies actually meant that I had *no* enemies. Not even my stepmother! This wasn't something I could just accept intellectually; it had to come from a spiritual dawning in my thoughts and heart. As I prayed with the ideas in this piece, the hardened feelings of hatred slowly started to melt away.

After quite a few years of studying how to love the way Jesus taught us to, including learning and understanding more of the ideas in this article, I needed to spend an afternoon helping my stepmother. With the supportive prayers of a practitioner, I was able to express love to my stepmother throughout the day, driving her around and assisting her with some tasks that were difficult for her. At the time, I had been suffering from an aggressive skin rash for two or three years. It was very uncomfortable and hard to keep hidden. The same practitioner had been praying with me about this issue periodically.

After dropping off my stepmother that day, I called the practitioner and told her, with much joy, that I had been able to express love freely to my stepmother. I was very grateful for this

progress—and within about a week, the rash had completely cleared up.

A few years later, my stepmother began living about a mile away from me. This made it natural for me to be the one to drive her to and from family gatherings. I was again able to express love toward her, but had not yet reached a point of total freedom from negative memories and anger.



Then one day, this statement in "Love Your Enemies"—referring to anyone who has hated us (or, in my case, whom we have hated) without cause—grabbed my attention: ". . . those unfortunate individuals are virtually thy best friends." I suddenly got it! If I had not gone through all those years of self-inflicted sorrow and pain as I held hatred in my heart toward my stepmother, I never would have been driven to the desperation that forced me to finally search for God . . . which ultimately led me to be the fortunate recipient of that forever-special first copy of *Science and Health!*

So, in essence, my stepmother is my best friend, because through her, indirectly, I found the "pearl of great price" (see Matthew 13:45, 46)—Christian Science—which has totally transformed my life.

As of that moment, I was free of all the hatred, which had caused me so much self-imposed suffering over many long years. Divine Love had dissolved it. I am grateful to now have the opportunity to visit my stepmother as often as possible and to joyously express love, without reservation. It is so wonderful to finally be free! ●

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Originally published in the May 4, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

When I read *Science and Health,* I knew my search was over

Lee Ann Schlatter

I WAS RAISED IN a Christian household. My dad was a practicing Christian Scientist, and Mom was active in another Christian denomination. Both loved God and lived their faith.

My sisters and I attended church with our mom until our high school years. However, my dad would sometimes share an issue of the *Sentinel* with me, saying, "There's an article in here you may find helpful." The ideas in the *Sentinel* really resonated with me. It made sense that a loving, good God would be loving and good to His creation.

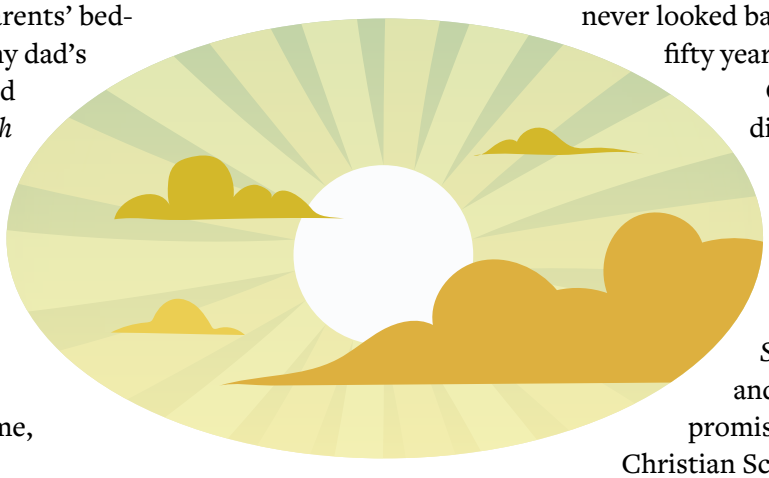
Fast-forward to the first semester of my sophomore year in college. It was a challenging time. I was searching for answers to life's big questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose?

Though at times I felt lonely and adrift, I knew the answers I needed were there. For a short time, I revisited the church I'd been raised in, but its teaching that God, whom I knew to be Love, created man with "original sin" didn't make sense to me.

I also looked for answers in social drinking, parties, and trying on some "bad girl" behaviors, even though I knew, deep in my heart, that they were not me. But through it all, I held firmly to the Bible promise "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

During semester break, while I was alone in my parents' home, my search for answers and direction continued to occupy my thoughts. One day, overwhelmed with despair, I reached out to God with all my heart, saying, "Help me, Father." Instantly, I heard the command, "Go get your father's books."

I went into my parents' bedroom, where I took my dad's copies of the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy from the nightstand before going back to my room. I sat down, opened *Science and Health* for the first time, and began reading.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

I don't recall specifically what I read, but my tears stopped; the despair completely disappeared; and I knew immediately that my search was over. The answers I'd been seeking were in *Science and Health*. That week, I went to the local Christian Science Reading Room, bought my own copy of the book, and took it back to college with me.

> **"I was searching for answers to life's big questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose?**

Every day after that began with reading something from *Science and Health*—maybe just one paragraph, or sometimes many pages. I read as I was led and found myself learning about God as my Father-Mother, and about myself as His child. I also began reading the Bible. I was striving to live the truths I was learning and reading by putting them into practice in my life. After college graduation, I joined The Mother Church (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston) and my local branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and never looked back. That was over fifty years ago.

Obedience to the divine message to "go get your father's books" introduced me to God, to the Christian Science pastor (the Bible and *Science and Health*), and to the Comforter promised by Christ Jesus—Christian Science. Since that day, God has poured out many blessings on my family and me. God's ever-present care and love have been proven to me in marriage and in raising three children, finding satisfying employment, meeting financial and academic challenges, and healing physical and relationship issues. Branch church membership and service have been a tremendous blessing to me in fostering my spiritual growth and my practice of Christian Science. I continue to grow in my understanding, both of God and of man made in God's image and likeness.

I am forever grateful to Mrs. Eddy for the love that propelled her selfless efforts to share her discovery, Christian Science, with the world through *Science and Health*, her other writings, the Christian Science magazines, and her establishment of The Church of Christ, Scientist. ●

Originally published in the May 11, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

How can I stop scrolling?

Molly Richardson Jerry

A MAJOR NEWS EVENT was unfolding in the United States, where I live. Unsure about how to think about it, I decided to log on to social media to see what other people were saying. The people I followed on this app often look at the world the way I do; I thought that seeing their takes on this issue would help me understand it better.

Huh. That was a startling thought. Rely on social media to tell me what to think? Actually, I had been spending more time than I wanted to on my phone—not just reading people's perspectives on the news but also mindlessly scrolling during work breaks or at the end of a long day.

This was the opposite of one of my favorite things I'd learned in Christian Science Sunday School, which was to think deeply about the concepts I was learning. Teachers encouraged my Sunday School classmates and me to ask questions and discuss anything we were wondering about or struggling with. And I'd also learned that the ideas I needed didn't come just from my conversations with others but also from praying and seeking answers from God.

> "I had been spending more time than I wanted to on my phone.

Reading the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy had taught me that we are made by God, so our thoughts, too, actually originate in God. Because God is good, these thoughts lead us in good and productive ways and provide healing answers when we need them. I realized that if I started relying on social media for my opinions, I was, in essence, ignoring my God-given ability to reason through and pray about issues in a way that brings constructive solutions.

Of course, it's not wrong to hear other people's perspectives on a topic. But I realized that regularly reading online posts left me frustrated rather than better informed. This reminded me of a Bible verse I love, which reads, in part, "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; . . . think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). It was true that when I focused on lovely and good things, I felt happier and better, because they led me to solutions rather than keeping me in a loop of anger and helplessness. It was also true that a lot of what I read on social media was pretty unlovely. But it was still tough for me to stop the scrolling.

As I prayed to God to help me break the social media habit, a surprising image came to mind. I pictured a sunset, rich in many colors, covering the western sky. A person standing under the sunset fixated on a speck of dirt on the ground, rather than looking up at the glory all around. I realized that this was like me as I scrolled. By engaging with whatever human drama was making people angry or afraid in that moment, I was missing the beauty of God's kingdom all around me. I realized I didn't need to keep trying to stop a bad habit. Instead, as I better understood and paid attention to how beautiful, vibrant, and good life is when seen from God's perspective, I would stop gravitating toward things that pointed in the opposite direction.

These realizations helped me cut way down on the time I spent scrolling. While I still sometimes feel pulled to pick up my phone more than I need to, I have never again been tempted to rely on social media for what to think.

In fact, even when a troubling series of events occurred in my community, I was able to focus on praying rather than scrolling. A question came to me very clearly during this time: Does power belong to people or to God? During a crisis, especially, it can feel like flawed humans have the power. Yet the Bible makes clear that God is the source of all real power. The Lord's Prayer tells us that God has the power and the glory—forever!

Through my prayers, I could see that God's all-power had to be made manifest in my community.

These ideas helped me feel peaceful about the situation, which was soon resolved. Focusing on prayer rather than on social media also led me to take concrete steps to help those in need in my community.

I'm grateful to be seeing more clearly how beautiful, good, and meaningful life in God is—outside of my phone. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Originally published in the May 18, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

Safe at school

Candace Anderson

Warning: The following article contains a brief reference to assault.

Q: There's been violence at my school before, and sometimes I'm scared to go. I want to pray, but I'm not really sure how.

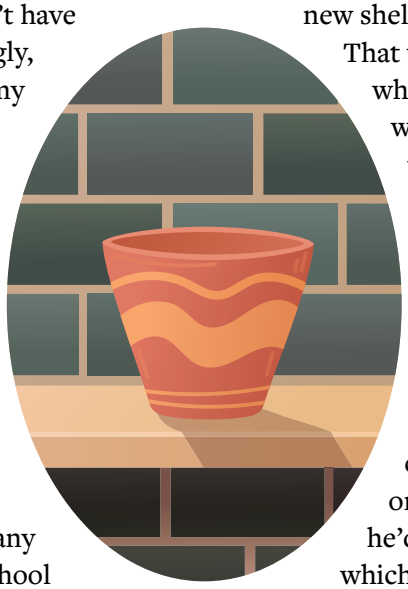
A: I'm glad you're thinking about prayer as a solution. It is always a solution. I had an experience that taught me more about how feeling God's presence can help us feel—and *be*—safe at school.

I was a first-year art teacher in a high school, working late one evening. My classroom was in a separate building from the main school building, so I was pretty isolated.

School hadn't been easy. I had a difficult class dominated by a nineteen-year-old gang leader. He needed to pass my class in order to finally

graduate. But between his behavior and the fact that he didn't want to do the work, things weren't going well. That night, I didn't hear him enter my classroom. Without warning, I was in a neck lock with a knife at my throat. He asked me if I knew how easy it would be for him to rape me. He told me that we were all alone and that no one would be able to help me.

I grew up attending Christian Science Sunday School and really made what I learned there my own after college. So I had a deep understanding of God and who we are as His children. In that moment of being threatened, I didn't have time to think or pray, but, surprisingly, these words came fearlessly out of my mouth: "You would never do that because that is not your nature."



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AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

I really felt that those words came from God. I'd learned from reading the Bible that God made us in His image and likeness and that "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Because of my practice of Christian Science, I knew that we are all children of God, who loves us and guides us as any good parent would. And as a high school teacher, I'd been praying each day to see all of my students that way. I'd also been praying for their protection.

I didn't feel any fear, because I knew that what I'd learned about God and His creation was true for this student and that God is ever present—guiding and protecting all of us.

The student hesitated for a few seconds, then released me and said, "You're all right, Ms. Anderson." After he put his switchblade away, we sat down and had a heart-to-heart chat. I learned about his difficult childhood and some of the things he'd faced. We talked for two hours. I forgave him and told him how much God loved him.

This young man's past experiences had him believing that he was a bad person because no one had ever voiced the truth to him. But I knew that his spiritual nature as the reflection of God, Spirit, was forever untouched by history, circumstance, or trauma.

The next day in class, when someone was disruptive, he stood up and demanded silence so that everyone could learn. That evening, he brought much-needed materials to my classroom and built new shelves for our art projects and supplies. That was the end of the problem. His whole attitude changed, and his grade went from an *F* to an *A-* by the end of the semester.

Several years later, I ran into him in the grocery store. His entire disposition was different. He was so proud to introduce me to his wife and child. And he told me how much my class had influenced his life and that he had one of the ceramic objects we made in class on his mantel to remind him of what he'd learned. He had felt God's love, which erased the darkness of his past and brought light into his life. Just a few moments of prayer acknowledging his true identity as a child of God had changed everything for him.

This experience gives me the conviction that no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in—in school or anywhere else—it's natural for us to live what we know of God's love and to see the effects in our own life and the lives of others. When we listen to God and see the good that is always present in everyone, we are able to respond fearlessly and with spiritual strength, even in a scary situation. ●

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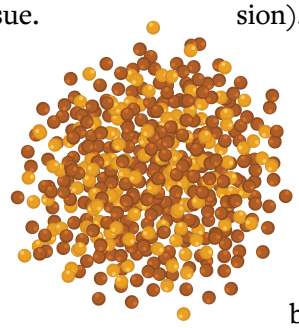
Moving mountains of despair

Lynn Hofflund

HERE'S A FUN FACT: The world is spinning at a thousand miles per hour at the equator. That's pretty fast, but not as fast as Earth hurtling around the sun at sixty-seven thousand miles per hour! We don't feel as though we're moving, but we are.

When I've felt stuck in a mentally dark place, filled with anxiety and feeling that there's no way out or forward, these facts have been helpful. I'll tell you how.

As an adult, I had to spend some time with one of my parents because of a family issue. What began as a temporary situation turned into several years of being away from my home. I was also unable to pursue my career as a theater actor. It felt like my life would be on hold forever.



I also found it hard to pray, which I was used to doing regularly and often. But, during a dark moment of feeling trapped and far from God, I recalled these facts about the earth's movement, and they reminded me that there is more going on than meets the eye. What's actually happening isn't always just what I'm thinking, seeing, or feeling.

I thought, "OK, my perception is that I'm standing still, that I'm in a rut and not making progress, and that feels unbearable. But physically, I'm actually moving at great speed right now, propelled by an unseen power greater than I am, even though it's imperceptible to the senses. I don't feel it happening, and I don't make it happen. I may not have done the original research or the calculations demonstrating this fact. But others did that work for me, and I have faith that their claims are true. I am not physically stuck; I am moving."

That line of reasoning brought me some comfort. But more importantly, it enabled a ray of light to penetrate the darkness. My next thought was, "I have faith."

Faith is what I'd felt I was lacking. Not blind faith, but a reasoned faith in God and His role in my life. This was important because I knew from my years of studying the Bible that recognizing this, even in the slightest degree, is a game-changer.

I recalled the powerful words and example of Christ Jesus, who promised his followers, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20, New International Version). Now that is movement!

I asked myself if I had faith in God as a grain of mustard seed, which is the tiniest of seeds. Yes, I'd just admitted that I did.

Was there a mountain I hoped to move? There was—not a literal mountain, but an imposing, oppressive, mental block; a mountain of despair and of feeling trapped in a situation over which I had no control. Could my iota of faith move this mountain? According to Jesus, yes.

I knew I could trust God, whom I also don't perceive with my physical senses, but whom I know is an ever-present power. My earlier argument based on physics once again came to mind, but this time, I thought about it from a spiritual standpoint: "To my perception, I'm standing still; I'm in a rut and not making progress, and that feels unbearable. But according to what Jesus and his disciples proved about God, I can affirm that I'm completely free, moving beyond mountains of despair, propelled by God, who is the only power. I may not feel it happening, and I also don't make it happen. I'm carried along effortlessly by God's unfolding guidance, whether I know it and believe it or not. I was not the first in demonstrating this spiritual fact; many have done so before me, especially Jesus, and I have (a mustard seed of) faith that his teachings are true. I am not stuck; I am moving."

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I felt relief and peace at the thought that God, who is totally good, was in charge of my experience. The circumstances had not changed, but my thoughts had. I knew all would be well—in fact, *was* well. The despair was gone.

Today, I am writing this from my own home, where I am happily reunited with my husband.

Additionally, an unexpected call came recently. After many years of being away, I received an invitation from a theater company to perform a significant role in a Shakespeare play.

Toward the end of the play, the character states to a despondent king, "It is required/you do awake your faith." In the story, mountains of unhappiness and years of sorrow melt for the king.

Whether in a play or in the drama of our lives, a mustard seed of faith in God can, and does, make a world of difference.•

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You're not the exception

Julia Schuck

FOR A LONG TIME, I thought the inspiring ideas I'd been hearing in Christian Science Sunday School were great, but probably didn't all apply to me.

Like, I could accept that I expressed God in some ways, but I didn't think I expressed God in other ways. For example, I'd learned from reading the Bible that we are created in God's image and that everything He made was very good. It's a nice idea—and, sure, I felt I was a good person and moderately good at using my talents. But when I looked at myself, I wasn't convinced that all of God's qualities—like beauty, grace, and radiance—were really there.

> **When I looked at myself, I wasn't convinced that all of God's qualities were really there.**

Sometimes, in Christian Science, we talk about spiritual perfection—the spiritual law that because God, Spirit, is perfect, we, as His spiritual reflection, are also perfect. I definitely didn't think this applied to me. I couldn't have felt further from perfection if I tried.

But I'm learning through my study of Christian Science that I am not the exception, because if there were exceptions to a scientific law, it wouldn't be a law.

A few years ago, I had an experience where I learned this in a way I'll never forget. It started when I realized I was shedding more hair than usual. This made me nervous because I'd already dealt with hair loss when I struggled with an eating disorder. (You can hear that healing here, on the May 6, 2024, *Sentinel* Watch program titled "Why I left Christian Science—and why I came back.") I felt I was rewinding to that time in my life when I'd felt terrible about myself. And I was worried that my naturally thin, fine hair would become even thinner. To put it plainly, I feared I was going to get uglier.

I decided to contact a Christian Science practitioner to pray with me, since I've had many healings in Christian Science. I knew I could speak to this practitioner without embarrassment or fear of judgment.

We talked about thinking less about the word *perfection* and focusing more on the idea that I was wholly good. I wasn't convinced that this would do anything to stop me from losing hair at a rapid rate. But I thought I could give thinking of myself as included in God's law a try. And being included in God's law meant that I must express

beauty—not because I had shampoo-commercial hair, but because I reflect God, good, and that includes every good quality.

I also thought about a sentence that a friend shared with me from a book by Mary Baker Eddy called *Retrospection and Introspection*. It says, "Science is the prism of Truth, which divides its rays and brings out the hues of Deity" (p. 35). This image helped me see that God is our source, and though we each bring out the hues of loveliness in our own way, we are the complete expression of that loveliness, including every "color."

God is our source, and though we each bring out the hues of loveliness in our own way, we are the complete expression of that loveliness.

I thought about these ideas as I washed my hair, focusing on what I was learning rather than on the fear that I would lose more clumps of hair in the shower. After I got out, I wrapped my hair in a towel and sat down, really feeling loved by God and maintained by divine Love, including every hair on my head. God couldn't be God if there could be anything wrong with His good and perfect creation. I was not left out of God's love or the completeness of what He made.

After a few minutes, when I felt totally at peace, I unwrapped my hair from the towel to find that I was, in fact, *not* bald. When I messaged the practitioner this exact thought, we laughed at the silliness of it. And we could laugh about it because I had a firmer understanding of my relation to God as His wholly loved, completely beautiful reflection—no exceptions.

The shedding immediately slowed to a normal level and has stayed that way ever since. In fact, my hair is the healthiest and thickest it's ever been. But what I learned—that I'm not left out of good or lacking any of God's qualities—has become the most valuable part of this healing. Realizing that I wasn't the exception to God's law and that I express God as completely as everyone else has helped me in so many other areas of my life, too.

You're not the exception to God's law, either. You are, in fact, the expression of God's law—wholly good and loved. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF
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Notes

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Prayer in sports: What's it all about?

Katherine Blair

THIS PAST YEAR WAS the most difficult I've ever experienced.

Junior year in high school is known for being exhausting, and that was definitely the case for me. But one thing that's always lifted me out of a challenging time has been soccer. After a very rough season of cross country in the fall, I was eager to start the spring soccer season.

Since I hadn't been playing year-round club soccer as I had in the past, I expected to be a little rusty. At first, when I made varsity again, it seemed like no time had passed. But after the first few weeks, my confidence quickly plummeted.

My coaches were constantly yelling at me, and I came back from games upset that my performance wasn't good enough. I worried that because

> **Soccer was the one thing that had always made me happy, and the thought of it being taken away crushed me.**

I had sacrificed club soccer for my six Advanced Placement classes, I wasn't good enough anymore, and my starting spot on the field would be taken by someone else.

This may seem like a small thing, but it chipped away at my confidence. At that point, soccer was the one thing that had always made me happy, and the thought of it being taken away crushed me. I've learned in Christian Science Sunday School that God created us and that we express Him in everything we do. So I kept telling myself that my God-given ability could not be lost or interfered with. But I was still worried.

I also knew that I could not be penalized for leaving club soccer—a decision my family and I had prayed about and felt right about. I knew I couldn't regress, because God does not regress, and as His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26, 27), I can only keep moving forward and getting better.

While I knew these thoughts I was praying with were true, I wasn't showing any progress on the soccer field. My fears kept overriding the good thoughts.

One day, my team and I were excited to play one of our biggest rivals, whom we had lost to the year before. Before every game, I find a quiet place and reread some articles from the Christian Science magazines that I have found helpful. I knew that I could apply the spiritual truths in these articles to my soccer performance, and they always reassured me that God was right by my side.

That day, as I opened a book containing a selection of these articles to a random page, I wanted to understand how the thoughts shared there could help me succeed on the field, or at least help me understand why I wasn't succeeding. This statement explaining my relation to divine Love and Principle—God—stood out to me: "As the reflection of divine Love, [the real man] is eternally calm and fearless. And being the idea of immutable Principle, he is orderly and accurate, ever expressing its perfect control" (Milton Simon, "Right assimilation," *Sentinel*, June 18, 1960).

I have always wanted to have one of those moments where I feel so close to God that all my problems and worries fade away, and I experienced it that very moment. I understood that I have dominion on the field, since my abilities are not self-made but gifted by God. This thought was powerful to me because I wasn't just reading the words and trying to make them apply to me. I felt that God was speaking directly to me. I felt so peaceful, calm, and loved. Although I felt I had never heard

God's voice before, I knew He was speaking to me through those words on that page. I felt His presence with me more strongly than ever. I wasn't trying to pray in order to play well during my game, either. I was praying to feel closer to God.

Usually, when I'd prayed before games, it was because I thought it would help me play better. But based on what I was experiencing in this moment, I realized that prayer was about so much more. I felt so confident that God was there and that all space was filled by Love.

> **"I wasn't trying to pray in order to play well during my game. I was praying to feel closer to God.**

Before I knew it, I was on the field ready to play. And I now played with more freedom, because feeling close to God means feeling more confident in my ability to express God's qualities, which are all good and include power, strength, tenacity, composure, and intelligence. At the 39th minute, from outside the 18-yard box I scored the most incredible goal in the top right corner of the net, breaking a tied score. We won!

From that point forward, my season only got better. I played in our undefeated season as well as the state championship game, where we were victorious. I was so grateful for the whole experience.

I've also learned two valuable lessons. First, having a perfect, trial-free life doesn't get you anywhere. We may have difficult moments, but through them all, God is guiding and loving us, and that helps our trust in Him grow. As a result, we overcome these difficult moments.

Second, I was skeptical about whether it is possible to feel the kind of closeness to God that is truly tangible, but that feeling does exist! I may have experienced it only once so far, but it is something I will never forget. And I'm sure I will experience it again. I am so grateful for God and my ability to grow with Him as my guide, caretaker, and friend. •



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

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What's my path after high school?

Virginia Gathings

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I wanted to do after high school graduation. I was interested in art and music, so my college and major were settled when a state school offered me a small stipend for private lessons as a music major. But during the two and a half years that I studied music, I still didn't know if I wanted to perform or teach.

I transferred to a big university in my hometown and changed my major to art, earning a bachelor's degree. Still, I had the nagging question, "What will I do?"



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

I had resisted the thought of teaching because I didn't see myself as a classroom teacher. But that summer, I took all the required education courses, and the following fall, I had an internship teaching art.

The internship was rough, mainly because I had no experience in teaching three full classes of sixth graders. I frequently spent my free periods praying to see each student as an obedient, interested child of God. This was important to me as a Christian Scientist. And this spiritual outlook proved to be especially helpful when a student took an item of value belonging to me and then spontaneously returned it the next day with an apology (see "Peel off those labels," *Sentinel,* February 19, 2018).



When the semester ended, it was midwinter, and I decided that I would rather start teaching in the fall—if I wanted to at all. I moved back home and went to an interview for a bookkeeping job at a local factory. But when I arrived, the personnel director apologized and told me there had been a mix-up; there was no job. She said, however, that they could use me on the assembly line. I agreed. It was physical work, but the factory was clean, and my coworkers were friendly. As the weeks went by, I wondered whether this would be my career after five years of college.

I'd heard that the university in my town had opened an art museum to house art collections donated by alumni. They had not yet hired someone to train volunteer guides and manage tour requests, and I thought that job would be perfect for me.

As I worked at my factory job, I began to pray. I knew from my study of Christian Science that my job was to represent God, who is good, and to express attributes of God—such as joy, artistry, consistency, and grace—as I understood them. I could do that on an assembly line or anywhere. And I knew that there is always a place for me because infinite God, Soul, expresses infinite individuality and needs each one of us to complete His infinite expression. My path was God-determined, not me-determined. I felt at peace with that and stopped worrying about what the next months or years of my life might look like.

After a few weeks, the museum director held interviews, and I was hired. I later learned that I was chosen because I had taken education courses—which meant that my time in school had paid off.



As for my music training, I played the organ in church during and after high school and college and in every place I have lived over a span of nearly sixty years.

This experience taught me that my real employment is to represent God, good, in all areas of my life and that it can be done in a wide variety of ways. We can express and serve God wherever we are led, enabling us to bless and be blessed, many times over.●

Originally published in the June 22, 2026, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel.*

Learning more about God—at camp

Zana Hess

IT WAS MY FIRST summer at a camp for Christian Scientists.

I was eight years old at the time, and everything felt new—the big trees, the smells, and all the kids who seemed to already know each other. That first night, after the lights went out in the cabin and the chatter quieted, I felt scared. I missed home. I thought, What if I'm alone here?

Then I remembered something my Christian Science Sunday School teacher had told me: "God is Love. That means Love is right where you are, all the time." I also thought about something I'd learned from reading *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy: "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need" (p. 494).

> **I started to look for God's love reflected in everything I did—and I always found it.**

So I asked myself, What do I need right now? I knew I needed to feel safe and loved.

In that moment of prayer, it felt like God was hugging me. Not with actual arms, but with calm, like the warmth of sunshine or the way water feels when it wraps around you in a lake. I knew that God hadn't dropped me off at camp and left, because God is ever present. God was right there, as I lay in my bunk and the trees rustled in the wind; He was expressed in the laughter of the other kids and even in the silence.

The next morning, I noticed that my counselor was kind and smiled at me, and a girl from my cabin invited me to sit with her at breakfast. I realized I wasn't forgotten or abandoned. I had never really been alone.

God was already there, and I could feel God's love in the friendships, activities, and joy I got to experience. Every day after that felt like a gift. One day at lunch, I even made new friends. I started to look for God's love reflected in everything I did—and I always found it.

Last summer, I attended a different camp for Christian Scientists—this time, as a sixteen-year-old kitchen crew intern. It felt like a full-circle moment in going back to camp, especially because I was feeling more grounded in what I've come to know about God and His ever-present love.

My job was to help prepare meals for campers and staff. It was a summer of early mornings, dishwashing, and laughter over uniforms that never seemed to stay clean or dry. It was busy, joyful, and humbling. And I realized that even though I wasn't with campers all day, our work behind the scenes was just as important. Every family-style meal, every chopped tomato, was an expression of love, service, and care.

One morning, I woke up feeling anxious. There was a lot to get done that day, and I was tired. I started to worry that I might let the team down. I even wondered if I was really ready for this responsibility.

That's when I remembered another idea from *Science and Health:* "God is everywhere, and nothing apart from Him is present or has power" (p. 473).

This statement reminded me that I wasn't doing this work alone. Strength, intelligence, joy, and peace were already present because God is always present. I didn't have to manufacture those qualities—I reflect them effortlessly because God created me. That moment completely shifted my day. The tasks didn't suddenly disappear, but the pressure did.

Being at camp last summer left me with such a deep sense of gratitude—not just for the fun and

the friendships but for the many ways I found to practice Christian Science each day. I'm grateful that I was able to support camp, whether by singing joyfully while sweeping the dining hall or by praying quietly in the kitchen during a busy lunch shift.

> **God's goodness and love aren't something I have to chase or earn. They're always right where I am.**

I also saw so clearly that God's goodness and love aren't something I have to chase or earn. They're always right where I am, just like I'd found when I was eight and learning to trust that I wasn't alone. I now see that the truth remains the same: I am not alone. None of us are.

God is everywhere, and God's love is always enough. ●



CHARLOTTE LONDON — STAFF

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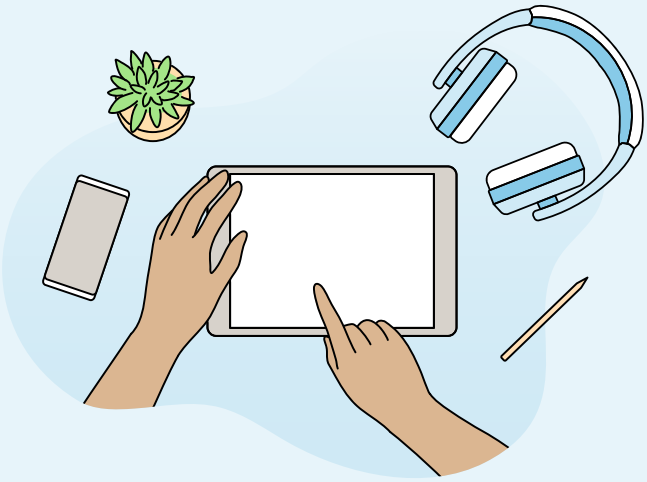
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