



# 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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*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;  
and I will dwell in the house [the consciousness] of [LOVE] for ever.*

— Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 578

# A Collection for Teens: January–June 2022

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL

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We look forward to hearing from you!

# On the way to the state soccer tournament

Anna Reighart

**MY SENIOR YEAR OF** high school had just begun, and I'd finally earned a starting spot on my school's soccer team. After a strong performance in the regular season, my team was eager for the state tournament and to make a run for the state championship.

However, I was frustrated and disappointed when my coach started his daughter, a freshman, ahead of me. After four years of diligent work, I

**I felt that my opportunity to be a starting player was being unfairly taken away.**

felt that my opportunity to be a starting player was being unfairly taken away. To top it off, I sprained my ankle in the last game before the play-offs. It was painful, and I walked with a limp.

Having attended a Christian Science Sunday School growing up, I knew I could turn to God with these problems. Sunday School had taught me that God is Life, the source of all good activity, and that God is Love, supporting each of us at every moment. Because of what I'd learned, God felt real and trustworthy to me, so it was natural to pray. And the best thing about turning to God in prayer is that it brings practical solutions—real healing.

When I started praying about my injured ankle, I found this verse in the Bible extremely helpful: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). I memorized this verse, and with each step I took, I would shift my thoughts to this idea. Instead of dwelling on pain, I started recognizing the spiritual fact that God is governing every part of me. As His child, I walk with God each moment and reflect His strength and poise. Certainly, walking with a lov-

ing God could not be painful. Instead, it was an opportunity to recognize my spiritual perfection, which couldn't change.

When game day rolled around, I felt honest and comfortable telling my coach that I could play. Even though I was still walking with a slight limp, each time I stepped onto the soccer field, I was able to play without pain. I ran freely and kicked the ball with ease. Even as thoughts came to mind arguing that my performance should be limited, I diligently affirmed that my right to walk—and run—perfectly came from God, because He made me.

My playing was going pretty well, but I was still frustrated with my coach. And while I'd prayed diligently about my ankle, I can't say I'd really prayed about the frustration. Finally, on the bus ride to the district finals game, I started praying about that, too.

Giving gratitude to God has always been one of my favorite ways of praying, because it helps me feel so close to God's goodness. So, during the ride I gave earnest gratitude for everyone involved in the game: our competitors, the ref-



erees, and my teammates. I was thankful for the field we were playing on and the beautiful weather that day. Blue skies and crisp fall air were perfect for a soccer game. And I gave genuine gratitude for my coach, who I knew was committed to our team and who I also knew could express fair and honest leadership. By the time we arrived at the field, the frustration was gone. I felt joyful and completely at peace.

The game was a very close match. In the second half, my coach played me, and I played really well and feel I made a strong contribution to our team. In the end, we won the game. As I played, my ankle felt completely functional, and I could tell my performance had been buoyed by my spiritual awareness of, and gratitude for, God’s goodness.

I was also grateful when, later that evening,

my coach called me unexpectedly. He commended my performance and thanked me for my joy, which he felt had uplifted the team. My coach even gave me a starting position for each subsequent game, culminating in the state championship game. And my ankle was painless—completely healed—and remained that way for all of those games.

Although my team lost the state finals, the harmony and healing I discovered during that season left me feeling victorious. This experience taught me about God’s unfailing love and His total power over every aspect of our lives. I know now that when we turn to God for help, even in the face of physical pain or challenging relationships, we will find healing and experience God’s blessings. ●

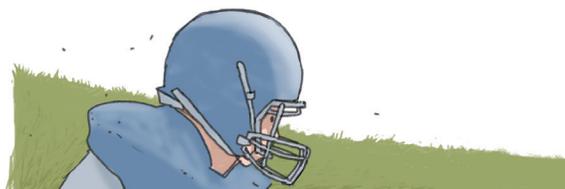
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## A quarterback prays

Gavin Ziesler

**IT WAS MY FIRST** day at quarterback for tackle football. At practice, I was excited and ready to run the play that the coach had called. It was a “quarterback keep,” and I had to run to the far right of the field carrying the ball. The run started off well, and I dodged a tackle by spinning my body out of the grasp of a defenseman. The next thing I knew, the coaches and I all heard a very loud pop. I fell to the ground, clutching my knee. I couldn’t walk, and I definitely couldn’t play any more football that day.

I wasn’t scared, but I had to be carried off the field because it hurt to walk. When I got home, my mom and I talked about some ideas from the Bible and from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. I knew this would help me, because our family has had lots of experience



praying with ideas from these two books, and I’ve seen how prayer in Christian Science results in faster, more reliable healing.

One of the issues that came up as we talked was that I felt I was weak, and that this was why I’d gotten hurt. But as soon as that came out, I knew it was a lie. The truth is that I am strong, and I knew I believed that. I have strength because I am the reflection of God, and God is all-powerful—never weak.

It is also really common to get hurt in football, so my mom prayed about that so we could see what is actually true and spiritually real: I am God’s, Life’s, expression. And as my mom always says, “Life’s expression is harmonious, purposeful, rightly directed action.” I could see that since this is true, I couldn’t be governed by supposed laws of danger.

The next couple of weeks, I was doing online school, and every day my knee felt better. I wasn't afraid to move around, and I wasn't in pain. I just did what I could physically, holding the expectation of healing all the time. One thing I did outside of school was attend a football game that my team was playing in, even though I couldn't play. It felt good to see my teammates again, and I was glad I could move more freely. But I wanted to be able to play, too, so my mom and I continued praying.

One idea I kept coming back to was that God made everybody free. To me, "free" meant that I

**I've seen how prayer in Christian Science results in faster, more reliable healing.**

had the right to use my body and have every part of it function normally. I knew that I was God's child, so nothing could stop me from expressing God's qualities, like flexibility and strength.

I went to every football practice to support my team and show integrity as a team member. One evening, I saw my former coach, who noticed my swollen knee and told me how long he felt it would take for my knee to be fully healed. At that moment I just said a mental "No!" to what he had said. I

knew that the only truth about me comes from God, so I could firmly reject that prediction because it suggested a lack of freedom, which was the opposite of the messages I'd been getting from God.

A few nights later, I was lying in bed, and when I twisted around to a more comfortable position, I heard a pop like the one we'd heard when I'd gotten hurt. Something in my knee had snapped back into place, and the following day I was fully back in action. I was able to go to practice and participate in every drill with no discomfort. I could run, sprint, jump, chop my feet, and fully straighten my knee. I was so happy! I participated in every practice that week and played in the next football game, where I had to block a kid who seemed more than twice my size. I played hard and with strength and didn't feel any pain.

Praying about my knee helped me understand more deeply what it really means to be free. And one other thing happened that I didn't expect. I realized that not being able to move and walk is not fun at all. Before this, when I'd gone on hikes, I'd never wanted to walk. But after this experience, I am never going to complain about walking ever again!

I'm grateful to God for this healing and for all I learned. ●

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## When God spoke to me

Deborah Taubman

**I WAS ON A** rock climbing weekend with a club I went with regularly. We would climb or hike in North Wales, the Lake District, and the Peak District in England. I never missed a weekend.

I was taking a break, sunbathing on a ledge halfway up a cliff, while others continued to climb above me. As I lay there enjoying the warmth,

these words suddenly popped into my head: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Psalms 91:11, 12). I recognized the words as a passage from the Bible and immediately felt protected and cared for.

The next thought that came to me was to bend my legs and bring my knees up to my chin. Half a second later, someone from the club who was

**I recognized that the thought to bring my knees to my chin had been an “angel message” from God.**

climbing above me dislodged a large boulder. It came crashing down, bouncing off the ledge where my legs had been, continuing down the cliff, and landing so hard that it tore a hole in an abandoned rucksack that lay at the bottom.

It might sound surprising, but instead of feeling shocked or scared, I felt calm and loved. I recognized that the thought to bring my knees to my chin had been an “angel message” from God.

I’d been brought up as a Christian Scientist and had loved my time as a student in the Sunday

School, where I’d learned that *angels* are “God’s thoughts passing to man,” as Mary Baker Eddy explains in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 581).

With all the thoughts that come to us on a daily basis, how do we know we’re hearing one of these angel messages? A Christian Scientist friend once told me that you can discern when a thought is from God by asking yourself, “Does this thought have God (Love, Truth, good) in it?” She said that if the answer was yes, then it was from God. If not, she said, the thought wasn’t worth listening to.

The dramatic experience of protection on the rock ledge resulting from that clear message from God was one of the most striking I’ve ever had. I am grateful to say that since then, I’ve heard God speak many times, and I’ve learned this important lesson: You are better able to hear God’s voice when you humbly seek guidance and are prepared to be obedient to the message. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

Originally published in the February 14, 2022, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# Stuck on the ski slope

Nancy Robison

**FROM THE TOP OF** the mountain, the parked cars on the road below looked like toys. How would I ever get back down there to where my mom was waiting for me? It was clear that I had made a big mistake. And there was no turning back.

It had all started out innocently enough. My mom had driven me to Mt. Waterman in our local mountains for ski lessons, which were given on top of the mountain and reachable only by a chair

**I knew that somehow God would show me the way.**

lift. After my first lesson, I'd had so much confidence in myself that I'd decided to ski down the face of the mountain instead of taking the chair lift back down. But now here I was at the top, and as I looked down the frightening, steep, tree-lined slope, I felt frozen with fear.

Skiers whizzed by me. Only one stopped and asked if I needed help. I nodded, and he said, "OK,

follow me!" Then away he went. So much for that!

From my Christian Science Sunday School class I had learned that God is always with us. We hear the word for that a lot at Christmastime—"Immanuel, or 'God with us,'" as Mary Baker Eddy wrote in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. xi). It's the promise Jesus taught and proved that God is Love and that none of us can ever be outside of His care. But while I did have confidence that God was right there, my legs still wouldn't move.

I began to sing Mrs. Eddy's hymn "Feed my sheep," which begins, "Shepherd, show me how to go/O'er the hillside steep" (*Poems*, p. 14). It was a *very* steep hillside, but I knew that somehow God would show me the way down.

At that time, skis were extra long, and difficult to maneuver. To make a turn, you had to point the skis downhill. That was beyond my ability. But as I stood there stock still in the cold, the thought suddenly came to try a different approach. I saw that I could go across the hill horizontally, letting



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the skis side slip, then make a kick turn, repeating until I reached the bottom. I definitely wouldn't have won any skiing awards for my descent, but I did make it to the bottom in one piece, feeling triumphant—and grateful for God's care.

When I reached the car, I found that my mom

had been praying, too. I'd been gone a long time, and she was very happy to see me.

There have been many other experiences in my life in which I've had to overcome fear, but this one has stayed with me as a proof that God really is with us and is always a very present help. ●

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## Teacher trouble

Dasha Wohlfarth

**I WAS DREADING** my physics class. At my school, everyone is required to select a “pathway,” which includes specific classes based on a topic of interest. I chose the green energy pathway. All of the students in that pathway are required to take physics with the same teacher. I'd heard from previous students that she was a tough teacher, so I started the class with low expectations.

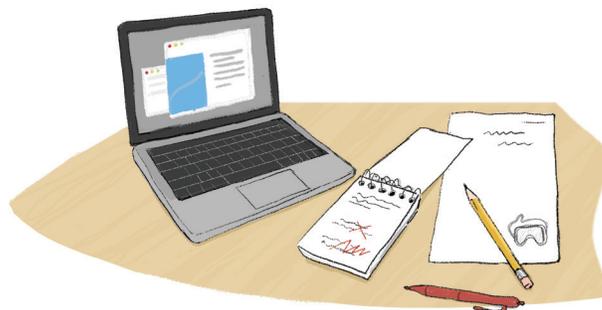
Having a negative attitude made the first quarter hard, especially since this was my first semester of online-only classes. I was easily frustrated by the assignments the teacher was giving us, and I had trouble reaching her outside of class because she rarely checked her emails.

The first few weeks, I tried to minimize our interactions. Fortunately, at the same time, I was having weekly calls with my Sunday School teacher, and I decided to talk to her about this problem. She said I could focus on the Golden Rule from Jesus' teachings in the Bible. The Golden Rule instructs us to treat others the way we want to be treated. My Sunday School teacher suggested that I think about others the way I would want them to think about me. She told me to try to think of one positive thing about my teacher every time I had her class. I'd learned in Christian Science Sunday School that it is important to see people as God sees them—as lovable and good, not as flawed

individuals who need to be better—so that's what I tried to do with my physics teacher.

The next time I had physics class, I prayed and tried to recognize some positive things about her, but I found it extremely challenging. Every time I would notice a positive thing, I would also think of ten negative things. I felt like I wasn't making any progress, but by this time, the semester was over anyway.

Still, I knew I would have to face this teacher again the next semester, so I kept trying to find a spiritual answer. In my Sunday School class, one of the ideas we discussed was what seeing the world with “spiritual goggles” would do to change your perspective. “Spiritual goggles” help us see people the way God created them—instead of based on surface appearances and negative impressions. Relying on God's perspective helps us move past



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seeing the bad in someone to seeing only the best qualities—spiritual qualities—in them.

I decided I would try this. I thought of some positive qualities my teacher expressed, such as intelligence, attention to detail, passion for her subject, patience, and willingness to trust her students to come up with creative solutions. I also had the idea to change my attitude and my approach to the class.

As soon as physics began again, I started participating more and attending the teacher’s online office hours each week to deepen my knowledge of what we were covering in class. My teacher really responded to this big change and even gave me her personal email address and phone number so I could reach her outside of class. We became bet-

ter acquainted, and she even sent me internship opportunities for the summer.

Praying and looking only for the good helped me move past my critical, frustrated attitude and one-sided view to see that she was a good teacher who wanted only the best for her students. With this shift in thinking, I was able to stop judging her and instead see her as a child of God.

I’m glad we are back to in-person classes this school year, and it was fun to finally meet this teacher face to face. I hope to apply what I’ve learned to my education in college and to any rocky relationships I may encounter in the future. This experience taught me that Christian Science brings a different and healing perspective. ●

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## How can I get rid of bad memories?

Nancy Lavender Bryan

**MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS STARTING**, and my family had just moved to a new city. It was hard to leave my best friend and begin seventh grade at a large school where I didn’t know anybody. So I was really glad to make friends with another girl who was new to our school. Her name was Cindy, and we quickly became best friends. We also made friends with a group of nice girls. Those friendships made seventh grade a great year.

Eighth grade was a completely different story. With no explanation, Cindy decided she didn’t want to be friends with me or our friend group anymore. And she was kind of mean about it. It was really hurtful—and awkward, too, because we sat together in a couple of classes and shared the same carpool. I was trapped in ex-friend-land with Cindy for a whole year.

At least, that’s how I remembered eighth grade for a long time. But at some point, I realized that just like with other hard things in my life, I could pray about what had happened with Cindy, as I’d learned from studying Christian Science. And something the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, wrote in her autobiography, *Retrospection and Introspection*, really helped me. After describing several difficult experiences in her own life, she said, “The human history needs to be revised, and the material record expunged” (p. 22).

I’ve often asked God to help me understand what that means and how to do it. Here are some practical, healing answers He’s given me.

Human history says that my best friend became my enemy and made eighth grade miserable. But God has shown me something different.

God’s messages of love have told me that I can revise that memory and let the hurt feelings go, because Love (a Bible-based name for God) was actually with me all that time, filling my life with

**You can be willing to listen for God’s messages telling you something different—something healing—about those difficult moments.**

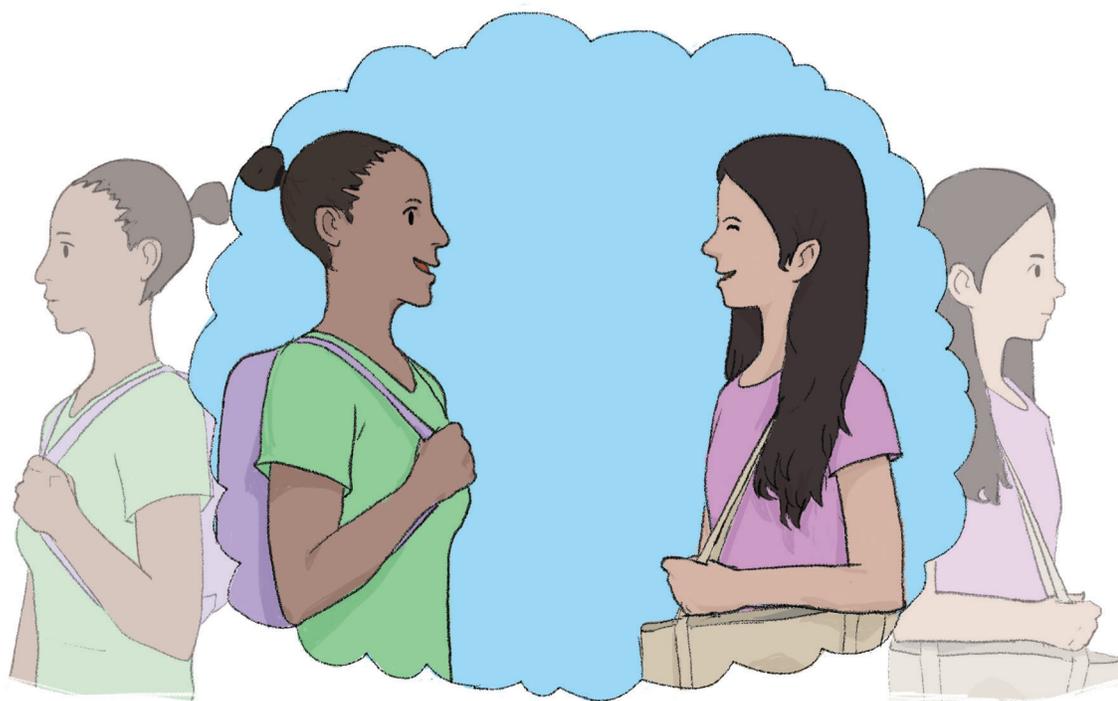
friendship. For example, I’ve been able to recognize that not only did the rest of my friend group stay together but I got adopted into another group of friends as well. And the coolest thing was that a girl named Melissa enrolled in school during eighth grade and became my new best friend. Our friendship is still going strong many years later!

As grateful as I was to discover that God’s love had been right there with me in eighth grade, I still thought of Cindy as an enemy. But Love

revised that memory, too. Recently, I was thinking of all the best friends I’ve had and thanking God for always giving me a friend when I needed one. And then I heard God say, “I gave you Cindy, too.” What an unexpected answer! God’s message made me realize that, while it’s never OK to be mean, remembering Cindy only as an enemy had made me totally forget the happy year of friendship we shared and how it had helped me—and Cindy, too, I’m sure—feel at home in a new school.

That’s how powerful Love is: It washed away the pain I felt and showed me how Cindy had actually blessed my life. I know now I’ll always remember her as one of my best friends.

It might not be easy to let go of bad memories, but we don’t have to do it on our own. God will help. You can be willing to listen for God’s messages telling you something different—something healing—about those difficult moments. You may not get the same answers I did, but Love will give you an answer that’s exactly right for you. And that answer can take away the hurt and erase those bad memories—completely. ●



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# “The best thing I could do was pray”

Trinity Hutt

**WHEN I WAS IN** high school, I was part of a program for young Christian Scientists, and I always looked forward to our big get-together in January. During this weekend event, we got to hang out with our friends, listen to speakers, and have a big celebration for the graduating seniors. This particular year, I was super excited to see everyone after the long flight from Boston to St. Louis.

As the weekend continued, however, I became increasingly aware of a painful blister forming on my heel. I tried my best to keep enjoying myself, but the pain was quickly getting worse. Finally,

**My spiritual identity doesn't include pain, annoyance, or fear.**

on the last full day of the trip, I knew I had to deal with the problem, so I opted out of the dance party after the graduation ceremony and went back to the dorms instead. When I hopped in the shower, I noticed that the blister had grown and that the area around it was also swollen.

From being in this program, I'd had a lot of practice praying about the problems that came up in my life, and I'd learned I could always expect healing. So I knew the best thing I could do was pray about this issue with my foot. This time, I started my prayers with the fact that I am spiritual, made in the image and likeness of Spirit, God, so I couldn't be harmed by anything.

I also asked for help from the Christian Science practitioner who was with us for the weekend, and she said she'd be happy to pray for me. We discussed keeping our thoughts completely



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pure by listening only to God, because only God tells us what's true. This conversation and a similar one with one of my friends helped to lift my spirits.

Later that night, I prayed specifically with a passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy that explains more about each individual's true, spiritual identity, which is encompassed by the term *man*. The passage reads, “MAN. The compound idea of infinite Spirit; the spiritual image and likeness of God; the full representation of Mind” (p. 591).

This definition helped me realize that my spiritual identity doesn't include pain, annoyance, or fear, so I had nothing to worry about. With this in mind, I went to bed with complete faith that I was and would continue to be fine.

Sure enough, the next morning my foot was almost entirely healed. The swelling had gone down, and I felt almost no pain. And just a few hours after that, I was blissfully running around the campus where we were staying with one of my friends. I was so happy to be able to enjoy the rest of my day and to do so pain-free.

I am so grateful for the better understanding of spiritual identity I gained during this trip and how it led to a quick healing. ●

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# When I lost my AirPods case

Courtlyn Reekstin

**MY AIRPODS CASE WASN'T** in my pocket. I'd been on a walk through Centennial Park in Seattle and had been chatting on the phone using my AirPods. But when I went to put them away after the call, the case wasn't there. I retraced my steps from my three-mile walk and searched my car, but I couldn't find the case anywhere. I was annoyed with myself for losing it, especially since it was expensive and new, and my AirPods would quickly be useless without it—I now had no way to charge them.

I called my mom to vent. She listened to my frustrations, then tried to help me calm down by sharing some ideas that I could pray with. While I don't remember the specifics, I know these ideas

**When I finished praying, I felt peaceful, satisfied, and relieved. I was no longer upset at myself or anyone else, and I didn't even feel pressured to find the case.**

related to what I had learned growing up in Christian Science Sunday School about God's goodness and guidance. Although these ideas helped me feel a little better, I admit that I didn't really want to hear them. I wanted her to commiserate with me!

For the next few days, I continued to feel sorry for myself. I didn't want to pray about this; I just wanted my AirPods case back. I decided to see if there were any community Facebook groups where I could post a message about the missing case, and I even made some paper signs that I put up around the park. Still, no one reached out to tell me they'd found it.

Finally, almost a week later, I decided I needed to pray about the situation—if not to find the case then at least to find peace. I was still feeling

unsettled and frustrated, but I've learned from other experiences that when I pray, I'm able to feel more of God's love and get a more spiritual, uplifted view of things. This is what helps me find peace; learn more about my relationship to God, infinite good; and even find solutions.

I decided to pray with the Lord's Prayer and found comfort in this line: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13). I liked praying with this idea, since I was worried that someone had found my AirPods case and pocketed it for themselves. I prayed to better understand that we all, as God's children, are honest and upright and can't be tempted to keep something that isn't ours.

I hadn't spent much time reading the weekly Christian Science Bible Lesson, so I dedicated my evening to studying each section. This Lesson, found in the *Christian Science Quarterly*, consists of related passages from the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, on a different inspired subject each week. When I finished praying with the ideas in the Lesson, I felt peaceful,



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satisfied, and relieved. I was no longer upset at myself or anyone else, and I didn't even feel pressured to find the case. Instead, I felt that I could trust that God would take care of me and that the peace would be lasting.

The next day after work, I got a call from a man who said that he'd found my AirPods case. He had actually found the case late the week before, but it wasn't until yesterday when he was out on a walk that he had seen my sign in the park. He told me that he usually never looks where this sign had

been posted, but that day, something had told him to look up. I believe that "something" was God.

We met at the park the next day, and he returned the case to me in perfect condition—even with a full charge! I was so grateful, not just for this resolution but for the reminder that every time I fully trust God's guidance and care, I gain a deeper understanding of my relationship to Him, along with tangible blessings. And this has led to a deeper conviction that God is always leading me and taking care of me. ●

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## A quick healing of a fractured wrist

Xander Wahlberg

**THE BASKETBALL SEASON WAS** well underway, and things were getting pretty intense. Early in the second half of one game, another player knocked me down, and I noticed some pain in my right wrist. It didn't seem too bad, and I thought I might be able to just put some ice on it and play in the next game. But when my coach saw how swollen my wrist was, he asked me to get it checked out before I played again.

A few hours later, I found myself at a medical clinic, where a doctor was explaining to me that I had fractured my wrist. He said that in order for it to heal I would need to wear a cast for about six weeks—meaning I would miss the rest of the basketball season and have to take my final exams left-handed.

I was surprised, and after hearing his assessment, had a lot of negative thoughts—like that my basketball season was over and that I wouldn't perform well on my finals because I couldn't write. I also had to decide what care to accept for my

wrist. While the doctor had recommended a hard cast, he was also willing to let me use just a temporary sling.

In thinking about which option to choose, I realized that using a hard cast sort of implied that it would take a certain amount of time for my wrist to heal. As a Christian Scientist, I'd learned that healings can happen through prayer and can be quick, even instantaneous, like they are in the Bible. I wanted to leave room for that possibility with my wrist, so I decided that putting my wrist



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in the sling would help me put full faith in God for healing rather than time.

Though I wanted to stay positive and was expecting healing, I found the next few days mentally challenging, and it was hard to keep my

**“He said that in order for it to heal I would need to wear a cast for about six weeks—meaning I would miss the rest of the basketball season.”**

thoughts focused on God. Then on Sunday I went to Christian Science Sunday School, which ended as it always does with a passage called “the scientific statement of being” from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. The part that stood out to me was: “Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual” (p. 468).

Yes, I’d heard these words hundreds of times, but this was the first time I took them to heart. They gave me a new outlook about God and about my real nature. Since God is Spirit and man (including everyone) is spiritual, I am—like God—without limitation. I didn’t have to wait to become spiritual or complete; that’s what I already am.

At that point I decided to stop looking at the problem and start looking at the solution. I started praying with a Christian Science practitioner, and I read a lot of the chapter on physiology in *Science and Health*. Many things from that chapter stood out to me, but something that was especially relevant to my situation and inspired me a lot was this: “Jesus cast out evil and healed the sick, not only without drugs, but without hypnotism, which is the reverse of ethical and pathological Truth-power” (p. 185). This gave me the confidence to keep looking to God, divine Mind, for answers and to focus on healing rather than on frustrations about what I couldn’t do physically.

After just a week and a half, my wrist was completely fine. My coach said I couldn’t play, though, unless the clinic gave me a clean bill of health, so I went back. Everyone at the clinic was pleased to see how quickly the wrist had healed, and they cleared me for play. This meant I didn’t need a sling anymore—and I was able to finish out the rest of the basketball season and take my finals with ease.

Although I was grateful that my wrist was fine, the most important part of this healing was the spiritual growth I experienced, because I now know that I can turn to God in any area of my life, and He will give me the spiritual understanding and guidance I need. ●

Originally published in the May 9, 2022, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# Finding my way back to Sunday School

Cameron Hill

**WHEN I BECAME A** teenager, I started to develop a distaste for Sunday School. I'd loved doing a variety of Christian Science activities when I was a kid, including attending Christian Science Sunday School. But now, I was becoming hyperaware of all the times when our class discussions would go off topic or when it felt like I hadn't learned anything.

Also, I was never satisfied with what happened in the class. When we only read from the weekly Bible Lesson (found in the *Christian Science Quarterly*), I wished we'd had a discussion. When we did have a discussion, I wished we'd read from the Lesson. I was blind to these contradictions and focused on the negative.

As time went on, I felt less motivated to go to Sunday School, and my attendance dropped. Even when the pandemic lockdown caused my church to close for an undetermined amount of time, my dislike for Sunday School only grew as I continued to reflect on all the things about it that weren't working for me.

Then the opportunity arose to attend an online version of Christian Science Sunday School sponsored by another church. I liked it and preferred many aspects over the in-person experience. I loved the thoughtful discussions and the way every topic was one I'd never before discussed from a Christian Science perspective. I felt like I didn't want to go back to my original Sunday School routine, when this new class was working so well for me.

It was also during this time that I found out that a loved one was struggling with something difficult, but I didn't get any more details. It sounded like a big deal, and I felt afraid. I'd learned in Sunday School that this was the kind of thing I could pray about, but I had no idea where to start.

After a while, my local church opened back up, but I didn't intend to go back. So, I stayed home every Sunday, reading parts of the Lesson on my own. But my parents really wanted me to return, so I finally agreed to go back for one class.

I was nervous. I was worried that things might be awkward. I was prepared for it to be a total disaster. Instead, the members of my Sunday School class were welcoming and excited to see me. And to my surprise, our discussions were more on topic, more uplifting, and even self-reflective. This was everything I had wanted.

But part of me was still expecting the conversation to get derailed any second. What I didn't expect was for my teacher to pull out an article from the *Christian Science Sentinel* that would change the way I was thinking about Sunday School—completely.

The article, written by William Curtis Coffman, was titled "Treat yourself daily" (March 6, 1948). It discussed some of the foundational points of Christian Science, including how to pray effectively for yourself each day. Several key ideas in the article related to what I was going through.

On the subject of fear, this idea stood out to me: "Fear is an enemy to progress. It begins to disappear as the fact that all reality is God and His idea becomes established in consciousness." For months, I'd been very worried about my loved one, but that passage helped me face down the fear. I realized that giving in to fear wouldn't help the situation, but knowing the reality of God's power and goodness would. I started feeling immensely better as my thoughts shifted in a more productive, spiritual direction.

The article also helps to clarify where every good and right thought comes from and why we should challenge thoughts that aren't good. It says:

“The Mind of Christ, man’s true consciousness, is God-sustained. It cannot be mesmerized by aggressive mental suggestions,” and, “Our duty to mankind is to love our brother man as God’s own image and likeness.” These passages changed my perspective on Sunday School by enabling me to start seeing the good—both in my class experience and in my fellow students. I felt my anger being lifted off of me as all those negative thoughts just dissolved.

After that, I was able to enjoy the rest of that Sunday School class without expecting something to go wrong. I felt genuinely connected to my classmates and my teacher. I left church that day inspired by what I had learned and grateful I had

been encouraged to come back. I was even excited to return the next week.

Since this healing, not only has my own attitude been different, but my Sunday School experience has improved as well. Our time on Sundays has been filled with deep spiritual discussions that I’ve adored. I’ve also learned that there are many benefits to being in Sunday School. The best part is that you get to have meaningful discussions about Christian Science with people your own age and that these can have a healing impact on your life. They did for me.

I’m so grateful that I found my way back to Sunday School. ●

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## Sailing with strength

Louisa Longshore

**I’VE BEEN ON A** sailing team for three years and recently learned to skipper a boat. I love sailing as a crew member, but skippering is really different. When you’re the skipper, you have to make a lot of very quick decisions based on not only the wind, currents, tide, and racecourse, but also where the other boats are in relation to yours. If you don’t consider everything, you might crash into another boat or break one of the rules and get a penalty.

It can feel incredibly intense and stressful, but it does not have to be. I have learned in Christian Science Sunday School that in these stressful moments I can pray and listen to God. God is omnipresent—everywhere. So no matter where you are or what situation you find yourself in, God, who is infinite intelligence, is right with you, and you can always hear God’s guidance. I recently had an experience that showed me that these ideas learned in Sunday School are applicable and true.

It was a very windy day, and I was assigned

to sail with another girl who was also learning to skipper. When I got in the boat, I remembered that God is always with me—even out on a sailboat in the ocean. God is the source of my direction, guidance, and strength, and I’m His expression, which means I can never be separated from Him.

My teammate started out as the skipper, but after a couple of minutes we switched. We sailed out from the dock and passed a mooring field. Things were going well, but suddenly, after about 35 minutes, we capsized. While we’d learned how to deal with what happens when you capsize, I had never had it happen to me before, and I was worried that we would have trouble righting the boat.

I immediately swam around to the back and grabbed the centerboard. One of our coaches cruised over to us and reminded us to unclip some of the lines so the boat would right more easily. Because it was such a windy day, the coach also

told us to do a scoop. A scoop is where one person rights the boat while the other person is tucked up inside. The person in the water is pulled up into the boat as the boat is righted. I was very

**“While we’d learned how to deal with what happens when you capsize, I had never had it happen to me before, and I was worried that we would have trouble righting the boat.**

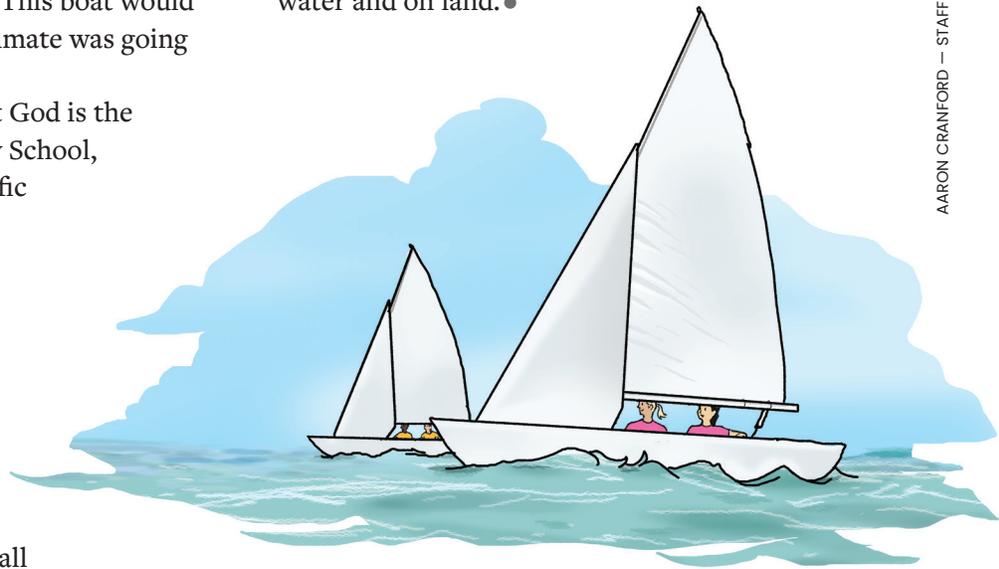
worried, because during capsizing practice a few weeks earlier, I hadn’t been able to right a boat by myself—I wasn’t strong enough. This boat would be even heavier because my teammate was going to be inside of it.

I began to pray, knowing that God is the source of my strength. In Sunday School, we always close with “the scientific statement of being” from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy (p. 468). I thought of the closing lines, “Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual,” which reminded me that since I am the likeness of God, and God is the source of all

strength, I had the strength I needed to right the boat. Being spiritual meant that I didn’t have to feel limited by the circumstances I was in.

Once I got the all-clear from my teammate, I pulled down on the centerboard. The boat swung smoothly around, and the mast and the sail were back, pointing up into the sky! I had gotten the boat up all by myself, and it had even felt easy. My teammate then reached over and pulled me back into the boat. The coach congratulated us and said that she was impressed with how quickly we had righted the boat, especially since the winds were so high.

I love knowing that I am the expression of God, Love, who gives me the strength, courage, and joy to meet the challenges that I face on the water and on land. ●



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

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# The only thing left was Love

Caryl Emra Farkas

**DURING MY LAST YEAR** at a summer camp for Christian Scientists, I'm pretty sure I could have been voted "Least likely to remain a Christian Scientist."

How things had changed! When I was twelve, I'd joined The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston. At thirteen, I was considered dependable enough in my grasp of Christian Science to substitute teach younger Sunday School students. I loved spiritual truth and was devoted to it.

Four years later, I was questioning everything I'd once held dear. The Bible had become a book full of contradictions and dubious sayings. The writings of Mary Baker Eddy left me with more questions than answers, and my Sunday School teacher's explanations didn't seem to help.

My academic education taught me how to reason from what is tangible. So the more aware I became of history and the goings-on in the world, the harder it was to believe in a supreme and loving God. My own healings and small experiences of divine Love paled

**The Bible had become a book full of contradictions.**

in the face of so much global human misery. Why should I be relieved of "swimmer's ear" through prayer when children in another part of the world were impoverished or living in the strife of war? What sort of God was in charge of that?

At that point I was pretty sure I knew better than anybody at church or camp. When I got to college that fall, I made one visit to the local branch Church of Christ, Scientist, and, finding it sparsely peopled and sort of musty, stopped attending altogether.

But as time went on, my desire to find a deeper sense of purpose and to make sense of

those childhood healings got stronger. I studied philosophy, practiced meditation, and investigated other religions, but all these stopped short of an all-encompassing truth. Along the way I had to deal with a lot of illness, and neither alternative nor mainstream medicine helped.

In the midst of a sickness that had left me bed-ridden, I was still yearning to understand. With nothing but time on my hands, again I compared religious theories and thought about physics and the arguments of atheism. But nothing felt quite complete or right.

One night found me mentally going through everything I thought I knew and tossing out whatever I'd accepted based on the opinions or theories of others. Whatever I couldn't find experiential proof for in my own life got put to the side. School learning, artistic interpretation, literary opinion, and whatever I'd ever seen disproved—even if in a small way—I rejected, wondering if in the end there would be anything left.

As it turned out, there was. It was divine Love. Love that had been there in spite of adverse circumstances and regardless of my worthiness. I had a sense of having been cared for that transcended material conditions. This sense of Love was so clearly divine and not of my own creation or imagination. It brought a profound peace, and soon after, healing.

The experience was familiar and made me feel like a child again—in the best way. Going back to my old copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, I found explanations that now made sense. I also found a spiritual demand that needed attention. There was a choice to be made: to live from this new/old revelation of spiritual reality or go back to business as usual. The way forward was clear to me now. The healings and the demonstrations of God's goodness in my life had not been incidents of divine interven-

tion or personal deserving but a glimpse of a far greater, spiritual good—the ever-present love of God.

After that turning point, things got a lot simpler, although not always easy. But as this hymn from the *Christian Science Hymnal* puts it:

From sense to Soul my pathway lies before me,  
From mist and shadow into Truth's clear day;  
The dawn of all things real is breaking o'er me,  
My heart is singing: I have found the way.  
(Violet Hay, No. 64, © CSBD) ●

Originally published in the June 13, 2022, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*.

# Spiritual lessons from lockdown

Hasha Freedman

**EVERYTHING HAD COME TO** a halt and there was no sign of it changing anytime soon. As the pandemic started, and then continued, nothing was the way it used to be. Because of the technology I had grown up with, I was accustomed to things moving and changing at a rapid pace. So while I knew I needed patience to make it through these tough times, I still found myself growing impatient, anxious, and fearful. I just wanted my life to return to normal as quickly as possible and to be able to see my friends and family again.

As the months dragged on, I felt I was slipping into a deep hole of fear, anxiety, and restless-

ness and it seemed like I couldn't pull myself out. Finally, I turned to my parents for help. Together we turned to the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's writings, as we had many times in the past when one of us needed healing.

One thing we talked about was "A Rule for Motives and Acts" from the *Manual of The Mother Church* (Mary Baker Eddy, p. 40). For months, my Christian Science Sunday School class had been working on memorizing this instruction, but I couldn't seem to find the time either to memorize it or to understand its ideas. But now, at one of the lowest points in my life, I found myself turning to it more and more.



AARON CRANFORD — STAFF

One phrase in particular caught my attention: “The members of this Church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil, . . .” During the stress of the pandemic, I had been turning to every source of distraction I could find. Instead of

**“I’d just been waiting for things to change so my misery could be over.**

seeking help to “be delivered” from the “evil” of this dark mind-set, I’d just been waiting for things to change so my misery could be over. Even though I knew I could pray, I’d convinced myself that prayer wouldn’t give me solutions fast enough.

But now, having arrived at what felt like a dead end, it was more apparent than ever to me that turning to Christian Science was the only option. I wanted to stop accepting these lies about myself and ask God to show me what was real and good about me as His child.

As I began to actively pray for myself and study passages from the Bible and from *Science*

*and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mrs. Eddy, it felt like I was getting reacquainted with many of my early Sunday School lessons—for example, that God is good, so as God’s child, I am good, too. And this meant that anxiety and fear couldn’t be part of who I am. I rediscovered the spiritual qualities of intelligence, stability, and liveliness that I felt I had been lacking. Now I could see that because I reflect these qualities from God, they are always included in my identity. Before, I’d been waiting for the world to change; now I realized that change would come as I put my faith and trust in my Father-Mother God.

After I turned to God and got back in touch with the truth about who I am, everything began to look up. Even though the world hadn’t yet gone back to normal, I was no longer feeling lost and like everything in my life was out of control. I was able to lean on God for my happiness and peace and more consistently express qualities like patience and hope. Most importantly, I rediscovered how powerful it is to turn to prayer when I have a need, and that I can expect healing. ●

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*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

—Matthew 5:14–16

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