

A rebuke may not sound very prayer-like. But when it comes to prayer, a rebuke given with spiritual authority can heal. A few years ago, I felt just that kind of authority. It occurred when I was skiing with my family.

I had headed up the mountain on the chairlift with a friend, and decided I would wait until my friend got off the lift first. But I suddenly realized I'd waited too long—if I didn't move fast, I'd be heading back down the hill on the chairlift. Without thinking, I jumped off.

My skis hit hard ice to the side of the lift chair, flew out from under me, and I landed hard on my shoulder. The pain was tremendous and immobilizing. But right there, I realized I had a choice. I could accept this accident as my reality, along with the accompanying pain and near-paralysis of my arm, hand, and fingers. Or, I could *rebuke* the pain and immobility, just as Jesus once rebuked a fever that had immobilized his disciple Peter's mother-in-law (see Luke 4:38, 39).

These thoughts came to me in an instant. And because of other healings I've had, they came with real authority. I knew that this rebuking meant casting the pain out of my thought as a mistaken belief, and replacing it with the truth of my God-given harmony and safety. That brought to mind a statement from the book *Science and Health*, where Mary Baker Eddy wrote: "You say that accidents, injuries, and disease kill man, but this is not true. The life of man is Mind. The material body manifests only what mortal mind believes, whether it be a broken bone, disease, or sin" (p. 402).

I continued praying along these lines: "In reality—that is, in the presence of God where God's idea dwells, where I dwell—there is only one Mind, and this Mind is God. And because there is only one Mind, one God, I can't suddenly have another god called pain, fear, or shock that could take over my consciousness."

It takes longer to retell this than it did to pray these thoughts, but I had the clear conviction that "the material body manifests only what mortal mind believes," and that I could change my thought-basis from believing that I was a material body in pain to spiritually understanding my God-given harmony and movement. I understood myself to be God's idea—already perfect, always whole—untouched by accident or the "sin" of misjudgment.

So, I took my stand, right within my

consciousness, that nothing destructive had ever happened to me as part of God's spiritual creation.

I got up and skied for a while, but decided to spend the rest of the day off my skis, praying to overcome the fear and pain. I continued praying along this line for a few days, weeding out of thought any mistaken belief of myself as material and injured, and filling my thoughts with God's Word, and with His laws of good. I refused to condemn myself or my ski-lift companion. Rather, I condemned—or rebuked—the discomfort and pain as false suggestions. Within a few days, I was completely well and could freely move my arm, hand, and fingers.

This concept of scientifically rebuking as false whatever God didn't make is a key element in my practice of Christian Science healing. I find it helps to ask myself, Is what I'm seeing, hearing, or feeling the reality? Or, is it something that should be prayerfully rebuked and removed?

From reading the Bible, I've found that Jesus taught how to rebuke the wrong in our lives and affirm the right. He confronted many physical conditions in those who came to him for healing, but he was able to heal physical ills through what he saw—or spiritually understood—of each individual's spiritual identity.

When Jesus visited his disciple Simon Peter's house and found that Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a fever, he had a choice. Naturally, he could see that she was ill, but I believe that instead of seeing her as a sick person, he must have chosen to see her as God created her—always whole and well. This story interests me because it explains not just what Jesus did but what he did not do. He didn't say, "Oh, she's not sick. Don't worry about her. Let's keep the dinner party going and we'll check on her later." Nor did he get upset with her, saying something like, "Why did you have to get sick tonight? This was supposed to be such a fun evening." What Jesus did do was to *rebuke the fever*. In this way he was affirming that the woman's spiritual identity did not include sickness. This spiritual understanding healed her.

Just as this account in Luke helped me to rebuke the pain that day when I was skiing, it can help anyone who's praying for healing, whether the trouble is a disease or a form of sin. An inspired rebuke can lead to complete freedom.

I like to think of this approach as the *other*



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BY LYNN JACKSON



Rebuke that heals

“Three R’s”—reverse, rebuke, replace. For example, if a friend pointed to a dog and said to you, “Look at that elephant. What a trunk! I wonder what it’s doing wandering the streets?” What would you do? You’d take a look for yourself and realize it wasn’t an elephant but a dog. And having seen the reality, you’d say, “No, that’s a dog, not an elephant.” It’s natural to reverse a misstatement—to rebuke the error and replace it with the truth.

Applying this type of reasoning to Christian Science treatment, when we pray for ourselves or someone else, it’s just as natural to rebuke the false and then replace it with the true. Rebuking someone’s mistaken belief turns the belief on itself. It destroys the belief, in the same way that a mistake in math is “destroyed” as soon as it’s seen. Then the spiritual fact becomes clear. And once spiritual truth has taken over in human consciousness, it’s manifested on the body.

This spiritually scientific method of praying enables me to understand what is real, true, and permanent about my being. So, anytime a thought comes suggesting that I’m hurt or in pain or limited in any way, I reverse it and pray to understand that as God’s child I’m not hurt, not in pain, not limited. I reject all such mistaken beliefs as fallacious because they’re contrary to God’s good law and power. God’s great love for each of us, and His all-power, are universal realities.

This approach to prayer isn’t a formula or a device to encourage positive thinking. Neither of those actually heals. Rather, I think of it as just a reminder of how to pray in times of trouble. Consistently looking beyond material appearances and into the spiritual reality guarantees that the mistaken beliefs we face are destroyed in consciousness. And once destroyed in this manner, they can’t return. This kind of mental watching—seeing beyond what the five senses claim is true—brings healing.

When prayer is spontaneous yet decisive, inspired yet methodical, the healer’s work is always fresh, never stereotyped. By doing what Jesus did when he healed, we discover and *feel* that which is real and permanent, actual and certain—our permanent spiritual selfhood. | **css**

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