

BY LYNN JACKSON

W

hen you're in the middle of praying about a longstanding problem, it can sometimes be hard not to think, "I've prayed and prayed and prayed, and there hasn't been a change. What do I do now?" The issue may be financial, physical, social, political, or some concern that just nags relentlessly. But when a difficulty seems to drag on and on, and discouragement and doubt settle in, this often results in wondering if you'll ever be free again.

Having faced long-term difficulties myself, there are two things I've learned to do in my prayer: 1) Be persistent, and 2) Get back to the basics of healing as taught in Christian Science. By not giving up and instead returning to the fundamentals I've always known and loved, I've seen how this approach can result in a healing that has seemed a long time in coming.

THE FIRST POINT: PERSISTENCE

Christ Jesus highlights the importance of not giving up, in his parable about a man who goes to another's home at midnight asking for three loaves of bread (see Luke 11:5-10). He shows that it's the knocker's persistence that eventually moves his friend to get up and provide the bread. And Jesus concludes his lesson with this salient point: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (verses 9, 10). In other words: "Keep with it. Don't stop knocking at the door, because prayer will always open up consciousness to the healing truth."

The door of spiritual consciousness is our thought. And prayer continually knocks at this door until it finally opens, and we yield to God—that is, when we're receptive to healing ideas from the divine Mind. Receptivity is a spiritual quality derived from God; it is not something we have to muster up on our own. Yet, it's important to consistently affirm in prayer that we are receptive to the ideas that will open the doors of consciousness and destroy false beliefs.

Continued knocking at the door—that is, continued prayer that declares the facts about our relationship with God—is strengthening. It may appear to gradually whittle away at the false belief in back of the trouble, or it may simply destroy that belief with one large blow. Either way, each day, our prayerful persistence accomplishes something, even if there is no apparent change in the condition. We can trust that any time we consider and accept divine truths, there must be a corresponding effect in our human experience. Advancing from false beliefs to spiritual understanding, from feeling fear to trusting God, we gain headway; the old mental ground is plowed up and prepared to accept the new seeds, or thoughts, of truth, which our prayers are planting and watering.

Sometimes we may pray about a set of problems each morning, and feel satisfied—but then leave the issues to the next morning, with the subtle expectation that we'll have to deal with them again. But the very belief that we have a problem may be the problem itself! This pattern of thought has to be broken, in order for healing to occur. Rather than just waiting for another metaphysical blow to lessen it, we can understandingly affirm that the disturbing situation we faced is over, because it has always amounted to nothing in God's sight.

**THE SECOND POINT:
RETURNING TO THE BASICS**

By this I mean those basic truths that are integral to a study of the Science of Christ—the foundational principles by which Jesus taught and healed. In my study, I often go back to the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and "the scientific statement of being" (*Science and Health*, p. 468). Each of these resources contains the spiritual truth that rebukes fear, reveals

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one's present spiritual perfection, and brings the expectation of progress and healing.

This point is well illustrated through a healing I had several years ago. Toward the end of a two-week vacation with my family, I suddenly experienced severe pain in my back, and found I could hardly move, let alone sleep comfortably. Although I prayed throughout the day and night, I became concerned about the plane ride home, since I couldn't even lift a simple tissue.

My prayers were moment-by-moment, hour-by-hour, persistent

acknowledgments of God's power and care. And I often returned to those basic truths I'd learned in Christian Science. After many hours of praying like this, I realized I needed to expect full and complete healing every moment, rather than accept there was no end in sight to this challenge.

From that point on, the only thing that mattered to me was getting closer to God. That was my sole goal—I just wanted to know my Maker better. So, I began to study the Bible more thoroughly, and in doing so found this verse: "It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect" (Ps. 18:32). I held to that along with this statement from *Science and Health*: "We have strength in proportion to our apprehension of the truth . . ." (p. 80). These truths became my defense against the aggressive thoughts of pain and discomfort.

The truth in these statements began to open the door of spiritual consciousness. And as I felt more of a conviction about their power, I felt well enough to board our return flight, even though the complete healing didn't come until after I'd arrived home. Gradually, as I prayed over the next few days, I became more receptive to God's love for me, to feeling His presence, to trusting in His healing power. Although I'd known them since childhood, now I truly desired and *demand*ed that these basic, fundamental facts be concrete in my understanding. Soon, healing took place peacefully, even gracefully, and the back pain has never returned.

St. Paul assured us: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it" (I Cor. 3:13). What a great promise! The day shall declare it. This means that the prayer we partake of today will have results today. It means that the false belief behind any hounding difficulty we're confronting is over, finished, kaput, today! The bottom line: Spiritual persistence always wins. **jc**

Lynn Jackson is a Christian Science teacher and practitioner in Lubbock, Texas.

"I think the persistence in prayer is needed, not so God will listen to us, but so we will listen to Him. He will rein in our thought from wandering all over the place, so we will instead yield to Him; heed what He has been revealing to us all along."

— Excerpt from a Sentinel Radio interview with Channing Walker

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