



**COVER ARTICLE**

# Gratitude and the healing of cancer

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I was a mother of young children when I began to experience some alarming symptoms. Although I was a student of Christian Science, I was so overcome with fear that I was inconsistent in praying for healing and decided to seek a medical diagnosis. After testing, the doctors informed me that I had cervical cancer. Since my husband's first wife had passed on from this same disease, I felt my life was over, and I sank into a deep, dark depression.

The doctors moved me through the initial medical procedures and surgeries very quickly because of their fear. Afterward they told me, "We're sorry to say that the cancer has spread, but we'll do the best we can to treat it." Though they insisted that radiation and chemotherapy were necessary, they never said these treatments were expected to cure me. I underwent six weeks of radiation, then received a phone call urging me to get started on the chemotherapy as soon as possible.

It was at that point that I reconsidered my course. Mary Baker Eddy's words from page 322 of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* came to mind: "The sharp experiences of belief in the supposititious life of matter, as well as our disappointments and ceaseless woes, turn us like tired children to the arms of divine Love. Then we begin to learn Life in divine Science." I saw that my life, as I knew it, was over, and that I must embark on a new life and a new way of thinking. This meant weeding out old, outmoded thoughts based on a material sense of myself, and aligning my thinking to what God knows about me as His child.

The first thing I needed to do was get past the paralyzing fear I had been feeling and cultivate a deeper love for myself as God's beloved daughter. My tendency had been to take care of others before myself, if at all. I judged myself constantly as not being a good enough mother or daughter. I criticized myself for not living up to society's version of an aesthetically beautiful woman. I thought I was totally responsible for the happiness of my husband, parents, children, and anyone else I came into contact with. I felt it was my job to cook only perfect and balanced meals, and to have children who behaved perfectly and were top achievers in school, sports, and all extracurricular activities. In short, I believed everything about my life had to be humanly perfect or it was a bad reflection on me. What a daunting load to carry! Where was God in that picture?

Mrs. Eddy wrote, "Let the 'male and female' of God's creating appear. Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy. Let us rejoice that we are subject to the divine 'powers that be'" (*Science and Health*, p. 249). Through earnest study of the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, and prayerful work with my Christian Science teacher, I began learning to keep my thought in agreement with God's knowledge of me as "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139:14). With a clearer realization that my life reflected God as Life, I began to gain dominion over the fear of disease.

The medical staff were very concerned and kept calling to urge me to begin chemotherapy. I thanked them sincerely but declined medical care and continued to pursue healing in Christian Science. I felt with all my heart that God loved me and wanted only the best for me—and cancer certainly didn't fit in the category of "best." I knew that if I could just get past the fear of dying, I would be healed.

I often woke in the middle of the night thinking about the words from Psalms 118:17: “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” I felt that Father-Mother God was speaking directly to me, giving me hope that all was well and that I would get through this challenge with my hand in Hers. I prayed: “Dear Father-Mother God, please show me the way. I am Yours. Use me to glorify You.”

About six months after stopping medical treatment, I became very ill. After I had been bedridden for about five days and was slipping in and out of consciousness, my husband and a neighbor carried me down the stairs and drove me to the hospital where I was treated for a staph infection in my abdomen. This was something I hadn’t consented to, and I don’t remember very much about that night. To appease family members who were concerned about me, I stayed in the hospital for a few days and then made the decision to return home, against the advice of the doctors. They were adamant the infection would require repeated treatments, but I chose instead to rely on Christian Science.

At that point I felt very fatigued and was losing weight. I feared that the cancer had worsened, but rather than be discouraged by this setback, I became more determined than ever to turn wholeheartedly to God. I began giving gratitude, both silently and audibly, for anything and everything. I thanked God every moment of the day and into the night. I simply let gratitude and thanksgiving permeate my thoughts.

One morning, after driving my children to school, I was sitting on the floor, folding laundry. Again the thought came to me, “If I can just let go of the paralyzing fear, then I will be healed.” For two years I had been carrying this debilitating fear. I was so tired of it. I decided to close my eyes and simply surrender to God. I knew that the healing I needed was a change of thought and that I didn’t have to look outside for help. As I kept my thoughts centered on God’s love for me, I had the sensation of a veil gently touching my face. Suddenly I felt light and buoyant. I was aware of a profound love, God’s love. Time seemed not to exist. I don’t know if it was half a second or five minutes that went by, but as the veil moved across my face, I went from excruciating fear to the most pristine and palpable love I have ever known.

I knew then, without doubt, that I could say with the Psalmist, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” At that moment I understood that God is wholly good and gives us peace, not suffering; health, not sickness; abundance, not scarcity; and love, not fear. Tears of gratitude flowed. Every bit of me felt liberated. I felt like dancing on tabletops! I thought: “Thank you, dear God! I feel cleansed and purified. It was never my job to be a perfect mortal. It was always to be the clear and pure transparency of Your love.”

After that, I stopped looking to my body to find out whether I was living or dying. I *knew* God was my Life. Within two to three weeks, my strength and appetite returned to normal. I felt completely well and have had no sign of the disease since then. A few months later, when I was at a community function, I happened to meet one of my doctors. He looked surprised to see me and asked how I was. I told him that Christian Science had healed me and that I’d never felt better.

Now, more than 16 years later, I look back on this healing of cancer as a milestone in my life. Gratitude gave me the spiritual altitude I needed to overcome fear. You see, one cannot focus on fear and on gratitude for God’s love at the same time. God *is* Love. And to paraphrase Second Corinthians 3:17, “Where the Spirit of [Love] is, there is liberty.”

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