

Adjusting to the Straight and Narrow

By Cassidy Proctor

Imagine you are hiking down a path in the mountains. For the sake of being biblical, let's call this path the straight and narrow. In the beginning, your path is clear and easy to see. However, as you continue, you reach a dense part of a forest and you lose your path. It takes a bit but you find yourself going in the wrong direction. So, you pull out your compass and adjust your course. For the time being, you are only able to adjust your course by one degree. In the short term, it doesn't feel as if you are making much progress however, you continuing along that corrected degree and you eventually see your straight and narrow path and correcting your course becomes easier.

Mary Baker Eddy, the discover and founder of Christian Science, frequently wrote about making progress and adjustments step by step, degree by degree. Step by step will those who trust Him find that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."(444:10), and "The letter of Science plentifully reaches humanity to-day, but its spirit comes only in small degrees." (113:3-5).

Sometimes we have marvelous healing and big glimpses of spirituality, other times, all we can do is reach toward the fringes of eternity. Christian Science is not an overnight process. For example, when I was younger I had rashes on my arms and neck. It was a persistent problem that would flare up around animals, hay, and when I would go from a wet climate to a dry one. This was problematic because my family had animals that I loved dearly, I loved riding horses in the summer, and I was frequently traveling between St.Louis and Denver. As time went on I began to get angry at the problem for persisting and was given the option to have a dermatologist look at it. I said no because I didn't want the hassle that taking the material would bring. So I struggled, not taking the material route for fear of hassle and what might be discovered and I didn't take the spiritual route for fear it wouldn't work. This led me to stay stuck on my path, not making any progress.

During this time of indecision, I was learning more about God through Sunday School and Bible classes at Principia. This learning would sometimes lead to big glimpses of the third degree, Spiritual Understanding, and sometimes led to small truths that brought me one step closer to the straight and narrow path. Eventually, the rashes began to disappear and not cause any pain.

Looking back, I see this healing as a lesson, reminding me to be patient with myself if healing is not instant. Instead of looking for fast-acting results, I should look towards God, towards the straight and narrow path and start to head back in the right direction. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how long it takes to get there, God pays no attention to the mortal measurement of time. What is important to understand is that "progress is the law of God, whose law demands of us only what we can certainly fulfill" (233:5). When you lost in the mountains, a compass helps you find your way home. When you are lost in thought, your compass will do the same.

Each person's compass will look different. However, if you "Hold steadfastly to the enduring, the good and the true and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts" (261:4). Having good quotes, hymns, or ideas to hold steadfastly to helps you to a) stay on your path, or b) get back to your path quicker.

Mrs. Eddy writes, "We walk in the footsteps of Truth and Love by following the example of our Master in the understanding of divine metaphysics. Christianity is the basis of true healing. Whatever holds human thought in line with unselfed love, receives directly the divine power" (192:27). Today, as we face world thought that would tempt us off our path, take a moment to remind yourself that you walk with Truth and Love. Take a moment to better understand the divine metaphysics as Jesus did and know that "Christianity is the basis of true healing" and practice unselfed love.

Be patient with yourself, your family and the world and thought begins to correct itself, degree by degree, and step by step.