

Prayer Power

By [Beverly Goldsmith](#), Christian Science [practitioner](#) and [teacher](#) in Brisbane, Australia.
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"Prayer brings your thought into line with the spiritual facts of your health and well-being. It brings you into harmony with god's power and love - and that has a healing impact on every aspect of your life" says Beverly Goldsmith of Brisbane, Australia.

A conversation with Beverly Goldsmith (by Jeffrey Hildner)

"All day e-mails pop up on my computer screen with requests for healing prayer," relates self-described technology enthusiast Beverly Goldsmith, a Christian Science teacher and practitioner in Brisbane, Australia. After all, she says, "we live in the 21st century, and we communicate in 21st-century ways." So it may not surprise you that we found ourselves spinning rather naturally into a 21st-century cyber conversation.



Beverly Goldsmith, C.S.B.

Cyber-dialogue is so new millennium - and it's so practical for someone like Ms. Goldsmith, who not only tackles non-stop professional demands, but whose down-under clock currently runs 15 hours ahead of folks here on the East Coast of the US. Brisbanites virtually live in the future. Which means that while I'm heading to church on Wednesday evening, it's Thursday morning for Goldsmith, who sits outdoors in her garden and e-mails me using the latest wireless mobile technology.

Goldsmith started her professional practice of Christian Science healing while in her mid-20s, and shortly thereafter began advertising her practice in the *Journal*. In 1991, she became a Christian Science teacher. Today, her broadband ministry - conducted via e-mail around the world - is only part of the wide spectrum of her tireless helping-other-people activities. She conducts workshops in Australia and New Zealand as a member of The Christian Science Board of Lectureship; writes articles as a contributing editor for this magazine and for our weekly sister publication, the *Christian Science Sentinel*; and teaches an annual how-to class on spiritual healing in which many of the concepts highlighted here are studied in depth.

- Prayer has no effect on God. Yet prayer, including prayer directed toward physical healing, can be unlimited in its impact and power. How does this work, Beverly? Maybe you could shed some light on this apparent paradox.

Prayer is powerful because it changes our thought and this in turn changes the body. Healing prayer isn't about asking God to change His thought. God doesn't have to redo His work. God didn't make us well and then somewhere along the line take health away from us. God is our divine Parent, and right from the start, when God thought you and me up, He made us absolutely perfect in every way. God gave us the very best of health and made us whole and well. The Bible says that God created us in the divine likeness and made us "very good" ([Gen. 1:31](#)). That has never changed. That's why in prayer I don't start with, "Oh no, this person is sick, and now I have to make him or her well." What I like to affirm is that God made each person healthy and *keeps* them healthy. God has never stopped caring for His children. Our Father-Mother loves each of us and keeps us safe and well.

Healing treatment, then, is about bringing our thought into line with the true, spiritual facts of our health and well-being. It's starting with what God is and what He's done for us. Then we hold to the spiritual fact that God's work is complete, permanent, and unchanging. So when I pray for a patient, I hold to the spiritual fact that they are well right now because God made them that way. Such prayer has a healing effect on mind and body, and on every aspect of one's life.

- A recent Gallup poll found that 61 percent of Americans said that "religion can answer all or most of today's problems" (June 24, 2004, [Gallup Poll](#), "Religion is 'Very Important' to 6 in 10 Americans," The data doesn't extend beyond the US, but I would imagine that the consensus is fairly universal. And what I'm inferring from your comments is that religion, were it to embrace the type of prayer you're describing, could deliver what so many people hope. It could successfully address any type of mental, circumstantial, or physical health troubles an individual might face.

I agree. And it's so interesting, because down here in Australia most people associate the word *religion* with a religious denomination, or church. So this word scares them a bit. Yet I've learned that healing prayer is not tied to a denominational tag. Anyone can practice spiritual healing. And yes, I know from my own life that spirituality does successfully heal mind, body, and spirit. No matter what situation I'm facing, I know that there's a solution. That's why for me, prayer or spiritual thinking is something I do

moment by moment. I pray about every facet of my life. Knowing - acknowledging, affirming, that divine Love is with me - meeting my needs, keeping me safe from harm, caring for me - has healed me of some 22 warts on my fingers, harmonized relationships, led to employment, and resolved a bad financial situation. Most of all, it's given me the confidence that God is with me, that divine Love *always* has an answer for me. This has also been true for other people whom I pray with. People are hungry to know God. They want to experience God's goodness and power in their lives. And they can.

- **What have you learned in your spiritual healing workshops about what people are seeking?**

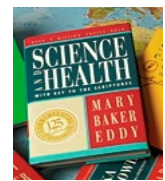
In the last ten years in Australia, I've seen a huge shift in public thought about spiritual healing. During the 90s, when I asked a public audience if they thought there was a connection between mind and body, only one or two people would raise their hands.

Today everyone in an audience says they understand there's a connection between what we think and what we experience. This concept isn't new to audiences anymore.

That's because increasingly people have looked into the connection between mind and body. They've read widely on positive thinking and self-help, as well as motivational and inspirational books. One young man told me he had 60 of these books on his bookshelf.

The interesting thing is that people tell me they've tried positive thinking and self-help theories but found that they aren't enough. Something is still missing. They believe there has to be more, and that the "more" is spirituality, which comes down to God and one's relationship to God. Now people want to discover the connection between spirituality and healing. How does it work? How can I heal myself ... and others?

These people don't want to be *told* about spiritual healing, they want to *experience* it. They want to know if there's a system and, if so, how it works. And they want to practice it themselves. They want to take charge of their health and well-being. Those who've attended my workshops have since reported that they're learning this system of healing in *Science and Health*, and that they're having healings themselves, as well as healing others.



Beverly Goldsmith speaker at Conscious Living workshop

- **That's the word that Mary Baker Eddy uses at various points in *Science and Health* to describe Christian Science - *system*. She says, for example, "This system enables the learner to demonstrate the divine Principle, upon which Jesus' healing was based, and the sacred rules for its present application to the cure of disease" (*Science and Health*, p. 147). Could you expand on this idea?**

In my professional practice I've learned that spiritual healing is not a mystery. It isn't abstract nor a special gift for only a few to practice. It's knowledge that's available to every person who wants to heal themselves and others.

Now a system is really a method, a way, a procedure, for how to do something. Jesus practiced a healing system. He gave instructions to his students, and to us too, about how to heal - what to think and what not to think. For example, he said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Matt. 6:25). That's definitely a "what not to do" if you want to be healthy and well. Then Jesus gave us this "what to do" instruction when he told us, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). This reminds us to accept what's true about ourselves - that we are perfectly healthy because God made us this way.

Mary Baker Eddy closely studied Jesus' system of healing and wrote down what she learned in *Science and Health*. She named this system of healing Christian Science. The chapter "*Christian Science Practice*" in *Science and Health* explains how to heal. It's full of instructions on how to think spiritually, and how not to think. For example: "Take possession of your body, and govern its feeling and action" p. 393. And elsewhere in the book: "You embrace your body in your thought, and you should delineate upon it thoughts of health, not of sickness". p. 208.

This system of spiritual healing is more than just thinking positively when you're ill. It's more than just saying for example, "I am well." To heal spiritually, one's prayer needs to acknowledge that connection with the divine healing power - God. So spiritual thinking for me would be, "I am well, *because* (and here's the spiritual part) divine Love made me that way."

In one of my dictionaries, *spirituality* is defined as "pertaining to the spirit ... as distinguished from the physical," "nonmaterial" - and my favourite, "relating to the conscious thoughts." For me this means spiritually conscious thought isn't about physicality, symptoms, or disease; material things such as possessions; or strategies like diet and exercise. And it certainly doesn't include fear, hate, or hopelessness. Spiritually conscious thought is about peace, expectancy of healing, compassion, and hope. It's about knowing - and ultimately feeling - divine Love's healing power.

Anyone of any age can learn and practice Christian Science healing. Children find it so easy. I know several families where the children pray for their parents - and the children are able to heal. I started when I was 13 years old. Since then I haven't been to a doctor or taken medicine of any kind. The system of metaphysical healing in *Science and Health* has shown me how to be well and stay well. It's been both curative and preventive. It's healed me of difficulties such as migraine headaches, and I'm sure it's what kept me safe when I was working in an Asian country where malaria was rampant.

- Everything you say supports what the Bible encourages, "**Physician, heal thyself**" (Luke 4:23). If someone is really interested in learning how to do this, to heal themselves or others, what would you recommend?

I like to share with people what I call the "**ABLE 4-step**." *Able* implies doing, so here are four things that you can do to learn how to heal. **A**cquire *Science and Health*.

Begin reading it.

Look for spiritual ideas in the book.

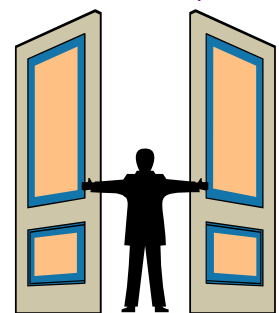
Embark on practicing these ideas.

Another step is to take the 12-lesson course on spiritual healing with a teacher of Christian Science healing. After the course, participants in the class attend yearly association meetings, which are essentially additional days of advanced teaching in how to heal.

The most important way to learn to heal is to practice, practice, practice. To do this, take one healing idea from *Science and Health* and really think about how it applies to what is going on in your life or body. Pray with it. Practice it.

For example, practice this concept: "**Stand porter at the door of thought**" (*Science and Health*, p. 392).

This means watch what you're letting into your thinking. A porter does two things. A porter lets people in who are supposed to be there, and keeps out those who aren't supposed to be there. So we have to practice *letting in* spiritual conclusions and *shutting out* unhealthy thoughts. Be active in this thinking. Watch what you let into your thoughts every moment. Don't let in unhealthy thoughts and fears about disease, heredity, or symptoms. Shut them out. Say no to them. Don't ruminate, reiterate, or speculate about sickness. Don't chew over thoughts like "what if?" or "why me?" Let in health-giving thoughts from God. Affirm that God made you well and strong - and *keeps* you well and strong.



- If people can learn to pray effectively for themselves, what's your role as a professional practitioner?

People can learn to do most things - like fixing a leaky tap. But when they've changed the washer and done what they can, and the tap *still* leaks, then they usually call a professional. They call a plumber. They don't wait until the situation is out of control or their house floods.

People can definitely learn to heal themselves spiritually. Yet sometimes a situation comes along where worry and fear clouds their thought and trust. The condition may seem too big for the person to deal with on his or her own. Or they may feel inexperienced in praying for themselves. When this happens they may need to call a professional - someone with experience in Christian Science healing.

Mary Baker Eddy put it this way, "If students do not readily heal themselves, they should early call an experienced Christian Scientist to aid them" (*Science and Health*, p. 420). She knew from experience that it's good for people to ask for assistance when they feel overwhelmed or afraid, or are not being healed. It's not helpful to let worry about your health grow bigger in your thinking. You want to nip sickness in the bud and get it healed.

My job, then, is to steadfastly pray with the patient until healing is accomplished. I remain confident, assured that God is loving and caring for the person, and that there is nothing for him or her to be anxious about. Together we can "side with God and win" (*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 296).

What do you do when your patient doesn't get better or the trouble isn't adjusted?

There's no simple answer to the question about what hinders healing or why healing seems to be delayed. Each person is individual. Each case is individual. Mary Baker Eddy discusses this point in *Science and Health*, and she shares what she learned from her own healing practice and that of her students. She says, for example, "The body improves under the same regimen which spiritualizes the thought, and if health is not made manifest under this regimen, this proves that fear is governing the body" p. 370.

For me, this means making sure that when I pray, I don't allow any thoughts of fear into my thinking. And I affirm in my treatment that nothing can prevent healing, that nothing can obstruct or delay the necessary change in the patient's thought that will result in healing. The power of God that is brought to bear in a treatment is immediately effective - right here and now. The patient is whole and well. Now.

Prayer is effective. If you don't believe this or expect this, then there isn't any point in praying. That's why I never give up. I believe that all things are possible to God. Healing can occur at any point. If healing seems to be delayed, then I redouble my efforts and keep praying. But if the patient doesn't want me to continue praying, and he or she wants to pursue other forms of treatment, then I gracefully withdraw from the case.

Any other special insight that experience and study have given you about how to be a more effective healer?

Both practitioner and patient need to be persistent in prayer. Stick with it. We're always dealing with thought. Spiritual thoughts have to outweigh unhealthy, fearful thoughts of sickness and disease. That happens by continually affirming such things as "God made me (or the person I'm praying for) well and keeps me (or the patient) well." This truth regarding one's spiritual being must be affirmed with confidence. It's so important to believe it. Rejoice in it. Expect to have good results, otherwise there's no point in praying. You have to have the *expectancy* of healing. God loves us. He made each of us perfectly healthy and well. This fact never changes. We have to hold to this truth until we experience health, harmony, and freedom.



Beverly Goldsmith is a Christian Science [practitioner](#) and [teacher](#) in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

[Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures](#) by Mary Baker Eddy, is her textbook on Christian Science healing practice and her class textbook in teaching Christian Science healing.

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