



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
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## How can I pray for people in desperate straits?

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**Q:** *I always see homeless people in my city and want to help. I feel like I should pray but don't really know how. Any ideas?*

**A:** My university had an open campus and was located in a highly economically diverse area of the city. So each day when I used public transportation, I might encounter anyone from fellow students to the homeless or drug users.

As a Christian Scientist, I'd learned that the way we see others can have an impact, and that it's important to hold ourselves accountable for the way we're thinking when we're interacting with someone. Are we reacting to an individual's appearance or behavior, or are we seeing past the surface? Through my study of the Bible and of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, I've discovered that there's a more helpful way of viewing those we meet. We can take a more elevated perspective by understanding each individual as the creation of God, good. We can see each person who crosses our path as forever in God's kingdom, where each one of us is whole and fully loved. I knew that the surface-level view leaves a person stuck in their problems, while a God-inspired and conscientious view can bring more of that individual's true nature to light.

That's why, as I commuted each day, I loved holding myself accountable for the way I was perceiving others. I proactively held a spiritual view as my standard and mentally corrected myself when I wasn't seeing someone that way. I was vigilant about loving the people I encountered, regardless of their appearance or apparent place in life.

One day, I boarded the city bus, planning to study or read as usual, when a young man sat down next to me. I could tell he was completely tweaked out on drugs. He was very hyperactive, and it was clear that all his senses were in overdrive. He quickly became interested in what I was working on, asking me about my schoolwork, what I was studying, and other general questions about myself.

I greeted him with a smile and conversed with him like I would anyone else. Having become more proactive about recognizing and affirming each individual's place in God's kingdom, it was natural for me to hold firmly to this spiritual fact about him, too. I knew that no one could stray from God's presence, and that all who dwell in God's kingdom are governed by God, divine Principle—meaning it's natural for them to express order, clarity, balance, and wholeness. Throughout the conversation, I mentally insisted to myself that God impels everyone in His kingdom to carry out their lives as intelligent, loving, and engaged individuals, because that's the way He made all of us.

Within about fifteen minutes, the bus reached my seatmate's stop, and when he stood up to leave, he thanked me. Not only

was his demeanor completely different than when he got on the bus, but also, he was of sound mind as he walked off.

Sometimes encountering people who are in circumstances we can't necessarily relate to can feel challenging. But actually, seeing everyone the way God made them, and loving them on this basis, is our natural inclination as fellow children of God. Whether or not you see the effects of this spiritual viewpoint right in that moment, you can trust that it does have an impact, because it has the power of God behind it.