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Pray on the go

By Elise L. Moore

How do you find time for spiritual growth and prayer when you don't even have time to eat? In high school and college, you're lucky if you get enough sleep.

If your family has never made spiritual study a priority, it might seem like an unnecessary annoyance. But, as I've found in my life, spiritual study and communion with God can *relieve* the stresses of daily schedules rather than add to them.

I grew up in a Bible-studying, put-God-first kind of family. Both of my parents regularly read the weekly Bible Lesson provided in the *Christian Science Quarterly*. They taught me to do the same. Church attendance on Sundays and Wednesday nights was as certain as school on Monday mornings.

Although teenage angst sometimes rebelled, I couldn't deny the benefits of that regular spiritual study and prayer. When I was in trouble or felt confused, I always turned to God as "a very present help."¹ And God was always there for me.

So you can imagine my frustration, guilt, and even fear, when I thought I was failing a college accounting course and couldn't seem to find the time to read the Bible Lesson or do any spiritual study. An independent project had been more demanding than I'd expected. I worked part time. I was carrying an extra course load. And then there was my increasing problem with focus. I'd study but not comprehend. It was taking more and more time to do the required work. Compounding it all was a feeling that I didn't deserve God's help. If I couldn't find the time to learn more about God, why would He help me?

Feeling defeated, I finally called my dad. He'd been valedictorian of his college class and always seemed to find time for spiritual study in the middle of a demanding business schedule. He'd once told me that he put this study first, and that's how he'd succeeded academically.

"Dad, I can't find time to read the Bible Lesson or pray, and I really need it," I told him. "Things aren't going well. I'm really trying, but it's not working."

He was quiet for a moment.

He asked, "What do you think Jesus did as he was traveling between one town and another?"

"Prayed?" I answered tentatively.

"Right," Dad replied. "He probably rode a donkey as he went from village to village and prayed as he rode."

"How long does it take you to walk to your first class in the morning?" he asked.

"Twenty minutes."

"That's twenty minutes you have to pray," he pronounced. "You know plenty of spiritual truths from reading the Bible Lesson and going to Sunday School. Just think about what you already know."

This was encouraging. I'd always thought I had to learn something new. Here Dad was saying I already knew what I needed to know about God and myself. I did know lots of Bible stories and loved to think about the lessons Bible characters learned and how those lessons applied to me and my life. In Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health*, I'd learned names for God that explained His nature as loving, wise, powerful. Now that Dad mentioned it, I'd memorized numerous Bible verses in Sunday School, along with hymns from the *Christian Science Hymnal* and passages from *Science and Health*. I had lots of good, spiritual thoughts with me all the time.

"How long does it take you to walk between your first and second classes?" Dad continued. We calculated that I spent almost two hours walking around

campus every day. "That gives you two hours each day to pray," he said.

Who would have thought it? If I didn't have to stay seated or be reading I could do lots of praying. I felt better already.

THE NEXT MORNING I stepped onto the snow-covered walk with a lighter heart. I mentally reviewed familiar prayers like the Lord's Prayer² and "the scientific statement of being"³ in *Science and Health*. The time spent walking to class flew by, and it felt so productive. I arrived at my first class feeling calmer than I had in weeks. As soon as I hit the pavement heading for class number two, I started praying again. Every hour I was praying for 10 to 20 minutes as I walked from one place to another. By the time I returned to my dorm, I'd thought about spiritual things and prayed for two hours. What a difference! I didn't feel guilty anymore. I felt closer to God and felt that God was close by me. That night it seemed easier to focus on my homework. The workload was still the same. Accounting was still difficult. But I was thinking about God more and more. And it helped.

After several days, the depression lifted and I regained most of my confidence. I didn't flunk accounting. I did complete the projects on time. And the next semester I found myself with plenty of time to read the Bible Lesson. But I continued the practice of praying as I went places. I still do. I pray as I walk down the street. I think about God's nature and my relation to God—as I drive around town, ride an elevator, wait for an airplane. There's nothing more refreshing than thinking spiritual thoughts. It inspires, calms, strengthens, and heals. If you're a student struggling with the feeling that you can't meet the demands, God can ease the burden. Trust that God has already given you the spiritual intuition and inspiration that you need. Look for those moments "between." These are the moments to know the goodness and power of God, and your ability to reflect the divine Mind.

¹ See Ps.46:1. ²See Matt.6:9-13. ³*Science and Health*, p. 468.