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Prayer and inheritance

By Elise L. Moore, CSB

Isn't it interesting how uncomfortable situations cause us to wilt or to grow? I prefer growing. When forced to face controversy, invariably it causes me to pray. Prayer leads me closer to God. And God leads me to fresh ways of thinking. This brings me peace and assurance. And somewhere in this process, the situation is resolved as well.

One of the most uncomfortable situations I've ever been in was an inheritance dispute. Wills were changed. Relatives were cut out to profit one person. Then subterfuge and misdirection obscured the changes. I was stunned when details dropped into my lap, exposing the event. What should I do?

The obvious answer to me was...pray. But how should I pray in this situation? It seemed awkward to ask God to rearrange a distribution of money. Perhaps the other party was petitioning God on the inheritance, and having it all was the answer to their prayer. Also, I didn't want to be motivated by covetousness or greed.

I remembered reading about someone asking Jesus to arbitrate an inheritance dispute. He refused. Then he warned the abused party not to think of life in terms of possessions. "Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions'" (Luke 12:13-15).

In considering this account, I began to ask myself what an inheritance was, really. Was it money? Or furniture? Or special mementos? Then it occurred to me to ask an even deeper question. From whom did I receive an inheritance? The Lord's Prayer immediately came to mind. "Our Father which art in heaven ... " (Matt. 6:9). In an amazing moment, it dawned on

me that the only Person I could inherit anything from is God! God is my Father and Mother. He is my creator and the source of all the good that I could ever receive. As the founder of the Monitor, Mary Baker Eddy, once wrote, "God is our Father and our Mother, our Minister and the great Physician: He is man's only real relative on earth and in heaven" ("Miscellaneous Writings," pg. 151).

I instantly felt closer to God. It was so clear that my relation to God is one-on-one, not a chain-link affair. I'm not generations distant from the source of good. God is my creator, and that makes me a first-generation idea, equal in status with all other first-generation ideas. No one is closer to God, and no one is lesser in status either. Not that this intimate relationship with God separates me from human family. Feeling close to God unites us as His spiritual creation. The division that comes from bloodlines, race, and nationality fades from thought and experience.

This opened a whole new way of thinking about inheritance. My inheritance came from God, not humans. It was the result of Life, not death. God's inheritance passes to us because He is forever living and bestowing good from the abundance of Life. I wasn't looking to receive good from death but from realizing God as Life and the source of eternal good. Since God is Spirit and good, God's inheritance must be spiritual and good. So inheritance wasn't money or things. It was qualities and spiritual treasures.

Intelligence, wisdom, integrity, grace, beauty, all the qualities of Life and Soul were my inheritance. I inherited all this good directly from the living God. We all received infinite spiritual qualities, spiritual treasures from God. My inheritance didn't deprive another, nor could theirs take away from me. What an astounding revelation! It entirely transformed my view of the situation. I didn't need to petition God for my inheritance. I already had it. Everyone had his or her divine inheritance. A wonderful sense of peace came with this new view. I felt assured that everyone would be fully blessed and no one would be deprived.

In the legal procedures that followed, these spiritual insights sustained and supported me. The final resolution came with a change in the other person's thought. They saw that they couldn't be deprived by sharing with others, and offered an equitable settlement. But the inspiration and spiritual growth gained from praying through this experience has been worth far more to me than any physical inheritance.