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Better than a placebo

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

Like Rob Gilbert mentioned yesterday, I, too, was interested in Sunday's program on 60 minutes discussing the Harvard study that said a placebo or sugar pill was as effective in treating depression as chemical medications. Does this mean that sickness is all in your mind or that you can overcome depression with a teaspoon of sugar like Mary Poppins said in the classic Disney movie? Disease and depression are more than imagination. Mary Baker Eddy, who was a pioneer in the mind-body connection, wrote in her textbook "Science and Health," "Sickness is neither imaginary nor unreal, — that is, to the frightened, false sense of the patient. Sickness is more than fancy; it is solid conviction." So, how does a placebo heal? I don't think the placebo heals depression any more than chemical medication. I think the patient is healed when the fear of the disease disappears. Eddy discovered this in her healing practice. She said, "If you succeed in wholly removing the fear, your patient is healed." You don't need a sugar pill to let go of fear. But you might need an epiphany, that God is real and truly loving you. That God is with you, right there in the room with you. That God is Love and that this divine Love is the structure and substance of your being. When you get a glimpse of God, fear fades. So today, let's go straight to the source, divine Love, and feel the presence of God helping and healing you.