

Cash

Does money define what you do? Who you are? Where you can go? Not so fast...

By Nate Frederick

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“I can’t do it because I don’t have the money.” Ever had that thought before? Yeah, I have. So then here’s another question: What do you do with that thought? Let it rule your life? Ignore it altogether?

When I graduated from college, money definitely felt like a determining force. I was so ready to break out of my Massachusetts shell and see the world. I wanted to ride elephants in the jungle, climb ice walls in the Himalayas, help the street children in India, laugh with strangers in foreign lands, and just soak up all the beauty and diversity in our expansive world.

But I had no cash.

So, I decided to work as hard as I could for a few months, save every penny, sell my car, then leave for half a year to travel the world on ten dollars a day. People didn’t think I could do it. But, I was inspired! I worked and worked and saved all the money I needed (\$3,000 + airfare) in three months. I bought my backpack and airline tickets. I was ready for take off!

Then my teeth started to hurt.

I visited the dentist the next week, and guess what he said? I needed to get my wisdom teeth out, immediately. And since I was fresh out of college and without dental insurance, it would cost me \$3,000—all the cash I'd worked so hard for!

Since I had been practicing Christian Science for several years, I recognized this event was not a random kind of thing. It was what Christian Scientists might call hypnotism, or the suggestion of evil. In other words, I knew this diagnosis was just a temptation for me to believe that God or Life wasn't good. Christian Science has taught me that we don't have to buy into those false suggestions. We can bank on the truth that God made each of us spiritual and complete, without pain and difficulty. We can learn to express Life without opposition.

I didn't pray for my teeth to get better or for God to let me go on the trip. As I quieted myself and just listened for God's guidance, I was inspired to simply pray that I couldn't be confused into thinking that there was another power besides God. Money wasn't determining my life. Pain wasn't determining my life. The dentist wasn't determining my life. God was my Life, and God doesn't give us good ideas, then take them away. As I prayed that way and began to feel God's love, everything felt better. From that moment on, my teeth stopped hurting—I still have them five years later—and I just went along with my trip as planned.

The six-and-a-half month journey was beyond-words awesomeness! I rode elephants in the jungle, befriended the street kids in India, mountaineered in the Himalayas. I even took a month-long ice climbing course in Hindi. But you know what happened at the end of this incredible voyage? I became afraid because I was out of cash. I also had no car,

no job, no home. But being without a car was a big one. If I had a car, I could get a job and get cash—I knew that from experience.

Secretly, I was hoping my well-to-do brother would give me his old Volkswagen GT. I so badly wanted that car. But he ended up selling it a month before I returned.

That was when I realized I could be open to God giving me something better. So many times on the trip I'd felt God's love and tangible provision had quickly been laid out for me. So, once again, I turned away from my car and cash issues and just focused on Love loving me. I spent those last two weeks abroad basking in that love, and I truly started to understand how God knows and meets all our needs.

A week before I returned, a friend e-mailed me out of the blue and asked if I wanted his all-leather Volkswagen Passat Wagon. I was like: Well, yes! He said I could work for him and pay it off. I ended up using my recently acquired mountaineering skills to scale his house and remove his chimney in exchange for the car. Who knew that would come in handy? I was soon employed with a great car and a nice housing situation.

The Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, says, “There is no power apart from God” (Mary Baker Eddy, [p. 228](#)). It's such a simple idea, but I'll be learning more about what it means for the rest of my life. I can say, though, that I've learned that cash is not a power. It's not something that can control us—or make us feel afraid. Relying on God can result in bodily healing, new opportunities for employment—whatever is needed to harmonize a money situation. But as I discovered, the change is never really about the money. It's about learning to feel loved, worthy—and ready to witness how awesome Life is.