

## **Parker Palmer, Pilgrim's Progress, and the Path of Pain**

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### **Abstract**

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*There often exists an immense disparity between the idealized goals of classroom teachers and the unrealized successes of these ambitious educators. Strategies have been devised and programs have been implemented to enable teachers to be successful; however, these practices often lack the empowerment to sustain teachers through the arduous tasks and demands of being an educator. Teacher education programs, professional development, and teacher curriculum are oftentimes not designed to equip teachers to overcome adversity and discouragement, let alone thrive in the teaching profession. The question is, then, "Why do some teachers persevere through adversity, even achieving great levels of satisfaction and effectiveness in the profession?" The research on teacher effectiveness has largely examined the techniques and strategies that equip teachers to be effective, but there is very little research that has investigated the impact of teacher spirituality upon teachers' beliefs regarding their own efficacy (teacher self-efficacy).*

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**Keywords:** *self-efficacy; spirituality; connectedness; resiliency*

### **Introduction**

*Parker Palmer, Pilgrim's Progress . . . and the Path of Pain.* How is that for an alliterative title? I suppose that as a teacher I am always looking for ways to capture my students' attention, or in this case, my readers' attention. Unlike previous attempts at alliteration, which can often be forced and distracting, this particular alliterative title seemed to just "fall from above."

In recent years, after familiarizing myself with the works of the well-known educator and author, Parker Palmer, I have continued to reconsider and reflect on his insights on the role of the teacher. Although I have never met Palmer face-to-face, the familiarity with which I hear his "voice" through his books, makes me feel as though this sage-like grandfather is sitting beside me in my own livingroom, speaking as it were, just to me. Palmer's words describing the difficult terrain a teacher traverses pierce and cut at the core of who I am, and yet through his words, a healing balm of God's touch is applied to these sensitivities.

In examining the work of Parker Palmer, I have come across a concept that has intrigued me. In his book entitled "*To Know as We Are Known*," Palmer describes a problem that is replete within the field of education and experienced within the hearts of teachers termed "the pain of disconnect." He argues that teachers often feel that they are merely surviving instead of living abundantly out of a deeper source and passion.

The deeper source and passion, from which Palmer asserts all true knowledge originates from and is sustained by, is love. The love of people, the love of God, and the love of the subject matter. Palmer suggests that it is only when we live from an “obedience to truth,” whereby we recover our spirituality, namely our authentic love to connect, can we begin to teach and learn in ways that cause us as educators to thrive. In his book, he explains that to overcome the tendency to teach objectively, to merely reach one’s intellect, we must embrace the truth that the “goal of knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds” (Palmer, 1983). It is not until we see ourselves as broken and less than what we were truly created to be, will we ever properly yearn for the only remedy that can heal our condition.

Parker Palmer has a way of describing the soul’s journey of a teacher, authentically articulating the perils, travail of soul, and the eventual breakthroughs that teachers often experience along the road. His descriptions of a teacher’s quest along the “inner landscape” of our lives reminds me of the journey traversed by the character *Christian* in John Bunyan’s allegorical novel entitled *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

Recently, I sat down with my three children to watch the movie version of *Pilgrim’s Progress*. As I watched the movie and periodically stopped to explain to my children the symbolism and check for understanding (It’s so hard to stop being a teacher), I became keenly aware of the resolve and resiliency demonstrated by the character *Christian*. Though *Christian* “failed” many a time by veering from the road towards the “celestial city,” I found it remarkable that these “setbacks” served as catalysts for future progress. It occurred to me that Palmer’s work at “inner landscape” and the “progress” which *Christian* achieved are similar, and even converge toward one another. In turning toward our own journey as educators, consider for a moment that teacher resiliency is only built after long bouts with our own “swamp of despair.”

In education, this tension referred to as “productive struggle” has become popular in today’s educational vernacular. “Productive struggle” speaks of the perseverance and resiliency demanded in tackling issues which do not always have an easy or one-dimensional solution. Although there are certainly “correct solutions” that *Christian* is instructed to utilize along his journey to stay on the path, he quickly realizes that his own resources, in and of himself, are not sufficient in making such progress. *Christian* begins to recognize that this heavenly path towards success is arduous and paved by setbacks. His progress is dependent upon struggle. That is to say, without struggle there can be no progress on the road marked by such peril. Success and struggle go hand-in-hand. It is *Christian*’s resolve to be disciplined and his reliance on the Divine which reinforce his resiliency, ultimately choosing to endure the path of pain.

Unlike a “this-world” kind of resiliency involving society’s encouragement to look down and within and “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps,” I would like to suggest that a teachers’ ability to thrive in the profession, rather than merely survive, is not achieved by solely reaching down, but by also reaching up as well. The psalmist captures this viewpoint, stating, “I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1, NIV). As educators look within at the difficulties of their inner landscape, they are invited by this passage to look up, too. In both looking up and within, the teachers can find our way to the “celestial city” of our own effectiveness and satisfaction. In light of this particular subject of developing resiliency, I would like to suggest that both a looking inward and outward be appropriated in this research endeavor. A literature review of the intersection between teacher spirituality and teacher self-efficacy is followed by findings which highlight the impact of such concepts on a teacher’s ability to be resilient.

## Literature Review

Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Hamer & Pianta, 2001; Selman, 2003). However, growing teacher despondency within the profession has stifled teacher effectiveness, which in turn, has had a debilitating effect on student achievement (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group [CPPRG], 1999). Teachers have grown discouraged over a variety of issues including student behavior problems and a widening in the achievement gap, but the most salient is the unintended negative outcomes of increased accountability measures required by the state and federal government (Bracey, 2003; Cho & Eberhard, 2013; Marshall, 1989; Reese, Gordon, & Price, 2004). In addition to these dilemmas are the daily demands of life outside the classroom that can dampen the devotion and perseverance of a teacher, thereby negatively affecting a teacher’s sense of his or her own efficacy. As a result, there often exists an immense disparity between the idealized goals of classroom teachers and the actual performance – with its shortcomings - of these educators.

Teachers often feel ineffective due to matters outside their locus of control, consequently resulting in frustration and growing dissatisfaction in their role as an educator (Cho & Eberhard, 2013; Reese et al., 2004). Several studies have documented teacher anxiety and frustration over pressures to perform, which have culminated in growing discontent, anxiety, shame, alienation, and loss of self-efficacy (Johnston, 1998; Johnston, Afflerbach, & Weiss, 1993; Johnston, Guice, Baker, Malone, & Michelson, 1995; Smith, 1991; Smith, Edelsky, Draper, Rottenberg, & Cherland, 1991).

### **Teachers, Tension, and Testing**

Berryhill, Linney, and Fromwick (2009), in their study of teacher anxiety, found variables that mediated any link between teacher burnout, loss of self-efficacy, and accountability policies. They identified two salient variables that emerged from their investigation of teacher perceptions on educational accountability measures. The two variables were coded as *role conflict* and *teacher efficacy*. According to the study, *role conflict* was described as the perceived incompatibility of two or more job functions (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970), while *teacher efficacy* was referred to as a teacher's belief regarding his or her effectiveness on impacting student achievement, in keeping with the theoretical framework of "self-efficacy" (Bandura, 1977). Since the 1980s, there has been growing interest in the study of teacher efficacy. Dembo and Gibson (1985) defined this phenomenon of teacher efficacy as "the extent to which teachers believe they can affect student learning" (p. 173). Suffice it to say, teacher efficacy is more related to a teacher's beliefs than observable behavior. Dembo and Gibson's definition of teacher self-efficacy is the operational definition used in this study.

Teachers have expressed many uncertainties concerning their efficaciousness, especially as it relates to the recent accountability measures for schools and staff. Berryhill et al. (2009) concluded that teachers were stressed over feeling incapable of facilitating student learning within the context of current high-stakes accountability systems (Abelmann, Elmore, Even, Kenyon, & Marshall, 1999; Conley & Goldman, 1995). Teacher burnout has been identified as just one of several unintended outcomes of high-stakes testing, whereby teachers often feel compelled to yield to federal, state, and local accountability measures. Teacher compliance to such accountability demands, reveals the pressure that teachers feel to capitulate to a system with which they are not in complete agreement (Cho, 2000; Harrison, 1997).

Teachers have attempted to maintain "fidelity" (Fullan & Pomfret, 1977) to standardized testing policies, but this has come at a tremendous sacrifice. Teachers have unwittingly or begrudgingly abandoned pedagogical intuitiveness in the name of "educational accountability efforts." That is, teachers have abandoned an individual incremental learning theory, or mastery approach, thereby succumbing to an entity model, whereby performance results between students are emphasized. In betraying their own instinct to measure students by growth, effort, and improvement, all in the name of "accountability," teachers have grown frustrated and even resistant to educational policies that uphold high-stakes testing structure.

### **Spirituality, Self-Efficacy, and Satisfaction**

Several authors have emphasized the need for the intentional spiritual development of educators to foster the growth of teacher self-efficacy, which consequently could improve student performance (Pajares, 1992; Stanley, 2011). The dilemma, however, is in "how" to develop a spiritual approach to facilitate teacher effectiveness. Stanley (2011) studied how teachers of at-risk students used spiritual stress-management techniques to build teacher efficacy in working with these students. In being more spiritually adept at handling stress, teachers are better able to relate to students with understanding and empathy, and thus feel more effective in their role. Louise Long (2008) encouraged the use of autoethnographies, or self-case studies, to provide examples of what teachers can do to encourage spiritual acuteness both for themselves and their students. Teachers were invited to use autoethnographies as a "method of exploring the role of the 'personal' in their professional work in pursuit of a greater understanding of their spiritual experiences" (p. 190). Therefore, teachers who utilize autoethnographies experience a greater sense of effectiveness because of their ability to connect with students.

Zohar and Marshall (2000) used the terms "spiritual intelligence" and "spiritual quotient" to describe the phenomenon of spirituality, whereby individuals integrate areas of life by recognizing each area's connectedness. In the case of educators, Zohar and Marshall argued that teachers are able to arrive at a deeper sense of spirituality by connecting who they are with their subject matter and their school community. To the spiritually-minded person, they are able to make connections between both the sacred and secular.

The neuroscientist Mario Beauregard utilized the term “RSME” as a designation for religious, spiritual, and/or mystical experiences (Beauregard & O’Leary, 2007). Most notably, the study revealed that RSMEs were instrumental as problem-solving behaviors. Some of the most common RSME practices were prayer, long drives, exercise, time with family, deep breathing, church meditation, hiking and camping, martial arts, and relaxation exercises. In another study, Benefits of Teacher ‘Connections’ in Stressful Educational Settings, Stanley (2011) found that “strong efficacy teachers face challenges by using problem-solving behaviors” (p. 52). Stanley (2011) identified several spiritually connective strategies that some teachers use in overcoming stressful educational settings, including exercise, reading, praying, etc.

Stanley (2011) also revealed significant implications for teachers who employ their spirituality to overcome their stress. Stanley explained that spirituality is valuable for managing stress and sustaining teacher efficacy. Spirituality is a tool for teachers in coping with the stress and demands of the educational field. Stanley’s findings revealed that teacher spirituality enabled teachers to build self-efficacy, which in turn, reduced anxiety. He discussed how spiritually adept teachers intentionally made connections between themselves, their students, and the relationship of content to people’s everyday lives. Stanley posited that the field of education is hindered when spirituality is either neglected or discouraged, reasoning that self-efficacy is weaker when meaningful connections are not made within the life of the educator. Stanley’s work adds to the literature showing the various benefits of spirituality upon a teacher’s life, specifically as it relates to the physical body, the psyche – including the perception of self-efficacy - and various sociological aspects.

Karadağ (2009), in a study exploring the effects of spirituality upon work life, suggested that work can become a vehicle by which to find the meaning of life (DeKlerk, 2005). In using work to find one’s meaning in life, Karadağ argued that spirituality provides the opportunity to rediscover oneself (Hoffman, 2003). In the case of a teacher, spirituality can offer great insight into the teacher’s purpose in life, as well as empower the educator to actively seek to make connections within the classroom. A teacher believes themselves more effective when he or she perceives spiritual connectedness with his or her work (Perrone et al., 2006).

Aided by spiritual practices and spiritual resources within their lives, teachers can grow in awareness of opportunities to make connections with God and others, resulting in awareness of increased potential for their effectiveness to be expressed in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, Palmer (1983) asserts that spirituality is “the human yearning to be connected.” When teachers connect with others in the school environment, teachers explain that they feel more purpose and satisfaction in their work. As teachers find that they are not alone in their struggles and can find support from their peers, they become increasingly convinced that they can withstand challenges. Teachers can collaborate and share struggles and best practices, which may result in an increased belief that they can be successful. A teacher’s community can help in facilitating a teacher’s spiritual formation so as to enable the educator to become increasingly resilient, and even effective. For example, administrators have been encouraged to “take an interest in [teachers’] professional and personal well-being” (Graseck, 2005, p. 376), thereby establishing a connected and caring environment whereby teachers are likely to feel more supported, thereby contributing to increased teacher self-efficacy. Furthermore, Graseck (2005) found that administrators and teachers alike felt more successful when they conducted and participated in staff development and trainings that centered on the spiritual domain of the professional development for teachers.

Kanarek and Lehman (2013) discussed three techniques used by teachers to make connections with their students. The authors identified prayer (notably for their students and situations in class), humor, amongst other items, as several ways salient ways in which a teacher can effectively connect with his or her students. Their study revealed that teachers used these techniques as mediums to alleviate their anxiety resulting from the various demands of the profession. The teachers indicated that as they implemented the techniques in their lives, the byproduct of a reduction in anxiety enabled them to focus on what they believed was their preeminent purpose as an educator, namely suitably connecting with students. Although effective connections with students, via techniques like humor, can be dependent on the student’s reception of the teacher’s humor, teacher techniques like personal prayer and meditative techniques were more or less under the teacher’s control because of their internal nature. As a result of this *locus of control*, teachers felt empowered to manage stress and were empowered with wisdom, fortitude, and insight to be able to connect with students. Therefore, prayer and meditative practices were viable means for teachers to connect with both God and their students, resulting in a greater sense of efficacy.

Teacher spirituality, and its relationship to teachers' level of anxiety and self-efficacy (as noted above), seems to have an impact on the teacher's ability to engage students in the classroom. Stanley (2011) conducted a purposeful sampling of educators who were successful at engaging students and found a negative correlation between teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy. He found teachers with low self-efficacy often avoided problems by withdrawing emotionally, and thus experienced lower self-efficacy. This type of withdrawal led to personal mental fatigue, a lack of connection with students, and a sense of helplessness (Chwalisz, Altmaier, & Russell, 1992). Comparatively, teachers with healthy self-efficacy handled problems constructively. Teachers with high self-efficacy felt less stressful and possessed a greater ability to connect their personal lives to the lives of their students.

### *The Impact of Self-Efficacy on Teacher Resiliency*

Teacher self-efficacy has the potential to empower teachers to persist and even thrive in the profession (Dobbins, 2016). Adversity has a way of hindering teacher self-efficacy to the point many teachers have abandoned their belief that they can teach students successfully. For others, adversity can lead to strengthening teacher resolve to teach with excellence. A study by Metropolitan Life (1985) found that 36% of teachers who left the profession stated they did so because of working conditions that made it intolerable to continue working in the profession. The number one reason these teachers left the profession was because of low pay in relation to the difficulty of the job assignment.

Coladarci (1992) explained that a large percentage of teachers would not choose to be a teacher if they had the decision to do it all over again. Several studies have indicated that many teachers would not have chosen to be a teacher if they could do it over again (Darling-Hammond, 1990). In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education examined why so many teachers were leaving the profession. Their report revealed that 56% of those who left the teaching profession did so because of dissatisfaction and subsequent aspirations to find a different career (Kopkowski, 2008). These studies disclose an alarming number of teachers who were discontent with their teaching experience.

Do some teachers lack the belief they can persist and eventually overcome their adversity? This begs further questions. Why do some teachers become disillusioned and fail to believe that the positive aspects of the teaching profession far outweigh the negative events? How is it that some teachers possess the self-efficacy needed to rise above circumstances, demonstrating that they will be effective no matter what may come their way?

Teacher efficacy is affected by teacher beliefs in multiple areas of education. Pedagogy, curriculum, and the function of school community are just a few areas of teacher beliefs that impact teacher efficacy (Porter & Freeman, 1986). The study of teacher perspectives, which is an extension of the genre of teacher beliefs, including areas such as goals, child development, and teaching practices, suggests that perspectives are established ideologies affirmed by experiences (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984). Researchers have added a further component to the evolution of belief, explaining that self-fulfilling prophecy, after having erected an established perspective by which to interpret all knowledge, reinforces these originally-held beliefs (Pajares, 1992).

Plainly speaking, beliefs are central to who a teacher is and by extension are influential on a teacher's experience and one's sense of efficacy. Teaching practices are not susceptible to change, good or bad, unless it is predicated on a change in the teacher's belief system. That is, teaching practices are subject to teacher held-beliefs. Pajares (1992) clarified the point by expounding on Rokeach's three assumptions (1968) of belief systems:

Teaching effectiveness consists of "nurturing moral and spiritual development" (Tell, 2001, p. 6). Thom et al. (2005) proposed that there is a necessity for educational leaders who are spiritual or know themselves and act from these core values and beliefs. Thom et al. (2005) maintained that it is necessary for educational leaders to look after their spiritual welfare if they are to achieve self-actualization as a teacher. In so doing, teachers who are more self-aware or have greater spiritual acuteness will become more effective with students in the classroom. Thus, Thom et al. and other researchers contend that spiritual development should be front and center in educational reform if teachers are to become more effective in the classroom

### ***The Impact of Spirituality on Overcoming Teacher Adversity***

Teachers and students may both benefit from a spiritual focus in the classroom. Although most modern academic institutions and teacher education programs have not readily encouraged, much less facilitated spiritual development, recent research like that conducted by Long (2008) has argued for spiritual emphasis in the educational environment, explaining that teachers and students may profit from such affective experiences (Stanley, 2011). Long explained that spiritual experiences aimed at being used in the classroom “should lead learners to have more autonomy in work, more satisfaction from work and more meaningful engagement at work” (as cited in Gooden, 2000, p. 8). Purpose and persistence were themes that often arose from the research, indicating that resiliency may be birthed out of spiritual experiences (Stanley, 2011). Spiritual aptitude enables teachers to find purpose, resulting in greater levels of self-efficacy (Kanarek & Lehman, 2013; Pajares, 1992). Spiritual components of passion and belief were often connected with persistence (Holt et al., 2011, p. 107).

A teacher’s spirituality was shown to have a positive impact on the persistence of teachers (Holt et al., 2011). One finding of the study showed that spiritual beliefs helped teachers continue to believe that “all students can succeed.” As the teacher maintained a belief that all students could succeed, this perspective led to both greater teacher self-efficacy, as well as student achievement. Holt et al. (2011) summarized the study’s findings;

The word [spirituality] was used to define a spirit and belief that all students can learn. Strong phrases such as “never give up,” “you can’t give up,” and “believe in their abilities” were echoed from most participants as well. This finding is consistent with Wheatley (2002), who found that persistence was critical for teaching excellence. (p. 107)

To become more effective in their teaching profession, educators have been encouraged to be spiritual people (Creighton, 1999; Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1999; Maxwell, 2003; Solomon & Hunter, 2002; Thom, 1984, 2002). Lee Shulman (2001) highlighted the necessity for teachers to engage in their spiritual development through intentionally connecting their spiritual knowledge with the classroom. He argued that effective teaching transpires when each generation is taught to uphold its duty of sustaining the goodness of humanity. For teachers to facilitate such virtuosity, it is imperative for teachers themselves to be lovers of spiritual matters like wisdom, beauty, morals, and ethics (Shulman, 2001). It appears many educators can greatly benefit by better understanding the influential role of spirituality upon their own quest towards student success, as well as their own personal satisfaction. However, as we shall see below, this quest can often entail the traversing of a path which is counterintuitive, undesirable, and therefore, many times less-traveled.

### **The Path of Pain**

I am convinced that the adversity experienced by Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress* and “the pain of disconnect” articulated by Palmer are quite similar, and at times, even synonymous. The “path of pain” relayed by both Palmer and by Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* are indicative of the shared experience as educators when we lose our way and find ourselves disconnected from God and our mission. However, given our plight as pilgrims in this life of having “not arrived” at our celestial city, we should not think it strange that we should have to endure such disconnect. It is inevitable. Nonetheless, we are often blindsided by the reality of such truth. That is to say, the pain we often experience, even along what appears to be a “path to glory” is often marked with suffering. There is defeat and disappointment. There is discouragement and despair. Part of the reason for this is that we have been socially preconditioned to think that the road to success should be marked with ease and expansion. However, we are instructed in Matthew 7:13-14 to “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (New King James Version, NKJV). The road to the celestial city of our own teacher effectiveness and satisfaction runs counterintuitive to what we might naturally surmise.

Parker Palmer identifies spirituality as “the human yearning to be connected.” To be disconnected is to become disengaged from our purpose and passion in living transcendent lives beyond the here and now. It is this yearning to live transcendentally, both in the here and beyond, that I believe best encapsulates *Christian’s* own desire and experience. The irony is that even in his own quest to connect to the King and the “celestial city,” Christian struggled with the “pain of disconnect.” He experienced periodic episodes of being “present” within the reality of his heavenly citizenship, being connected with his purpose, passion, and promise of what was to come.

Then, almost without warning, he was curtailed in his own “knowing,” resulting in a feeling of alienation from God due to his own wandering from the path. Consequently, Christian would find himself absorbed in his own pain of disconnect from “obedience to truth.” That is to say, Christian found it difficult to live from the truth of who he was created to be in his person. Several times, Christian veered from the path God had laid out for him. Consequently, he often missed out on the pleasures awaiting him, thereby being left to experience the pain of feeling disconnected from God’s benefits. Like you and I, Christian is loved, and by that token, experiences correction and consequences. Proverbs 3:12 tells us that “The Lord disciplines those whom he loves” (NIV).

I believe the reality and necessity of such productive struggle along the path of pain is well-illustrated by a passage found in John chapter 12. Jesus is entering the city of Jerusalem in which he is being well received with a lot of fanfare. His path up to this city is marked by many people singing his praises. On this particular occasion, there are a group of pilgrims going up the feast who “wish to see Jesus.” In what would instinctively be a time to celebrate and enter a time of “glory,” Jesus responds to this particular request of expectant onlookers by stating, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified” (NKJV). To all in attendance, I would imagine that this was the moment that all his followers were expecting Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel, of which he would reign and rule.

Yet, Jesus responds to the people’s request to “see” him in his glory by unfolding a very different picture of what his hour of glory will entail. Jesus begins to offer an illustration, a very familiar agrarian illustration, which would have resonated with his listeners. He says,

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (NKJV)

The illustration is of Jesus himself. It will be in his own death whereby life will be produced. Without death, there is no new life. A seed must cease being a seed in order for the life within the seed to emanate.

Jesus does not speak solely of himself, however. Rather, he is effectively calling all his followers past and present, you and I, to come and follow him along the path of pain. It all seems so counterintuitive, doesn’t it? This is Jesus’ moment to be glorified. This is his moment to enter the city. Yet, this city is not his final destination. He is seeking a “celestial city,” whereby he will experience pure, unadulterated glory. His glory will come from having given life to us as repentant sinners, through his death. In His death, repentant sinners are brought safely onward towards heaven. Subsequently, Jesus will have gained a life of connectedness both with humanity, as well as his heavenly father.

And now, Jesus invites us along the same path of pain. This is our hour to be glorified. He invites us as teachers to recognize that we are called as pilgrims towards the celestial city. In experiencing our pain of disconnect, we actually yearn even more to be connected. He bids us along the path to come and die, so that we may truly live. As we lose our lives, we find that we actually gain them. As teachers, we must remain resilient and steadfast, even in our failures and setbacks. Fortunately we are not left to ourselves to find our way along the path. Jesus is our example of resiliency.

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