

By Pat Haggerty

Learning a new language isn't easy. Some people have a greater facility with languages, which makes learning a second or third language a joy rather than a burden. These people are blessed with what Howard Gardner (originator of the multiple intelligences theory) calls a strength in the linguistic area of intelligence.

For people needing to learn English, I think one of the most difficult parts of our language is the understanding of idioms. This can be difficult for English speakers, as well. Young children have a hard time grasping the concept of idioms, as they take everything literally. Just because we might say, "you are walking on thin ice", doesn't mean one is literally *walking on thin ice.* It means that one is in a precarious or dangerous situation. Here are a few other common idioms: don't "beat around the bush"; "go back to the drawing board"; you are really "on the ball"; or "she is on cloud nine". One idiom that I have been reflecting on is "got thrown a curve ball."

I recently experienced this idiom in its truest sense. It means that life may be going along smoothly and, all of a sudden, something happens to change things. How one deals with this change is the important thing. From a spiritual perspective, it means accepting what God has given us and making the most of it.

It takes a lot of trust in God's plan for us to accept adversity and to move forward in our lives. We want to keep asking, why me? Why did this happen? What am I to do now? The curveball may have forced us to slow down in our lives, to make some changes and to create some newness in our daily routine. This is what life is all about. For me, trusting in the Lord is not always easy. I have to remind myself of the words from Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Prov. 3:5-6)

So, what are you going to do when you are thrown a curveball? Are you going to crumble and despair, or are you going to face it head-on? Like a good baseball player, one faces the curveball head-on. It may be a hit or it may not. Either way, we move on. For the baseball player, it is to the next base or to the dugout. For the rest of us, we move on with life and make adjustments as necessary. Ultimately, we trust that God will lead us to where we are supposed to be.