

# The time to pray is now

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Where is God when innocent people are killed? How can a God who is Love permit such tragedy to happen? Only people of faith ask such questions.

Those who do not believe that God is Love shrug and say evil happens. Those who think that God is of little help to man say tragedies prove their point. But those who know and have experienced something of the power of God know that God is good. They expect more of God, like protection and safety.

The answer is that those who understand something of the power of God need to use that power to combat evil effectively. We must do this for ourselves as well as others. Mental apathy is evil's best accomplice. Feeling overwhelmed by the problem, helpless or afraid paralyzes mental action. Then instead of using the power of prayer to prevent evil, we ask why, and do nothing.

Don't give in! And don't give up! Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." The time to act, the time to pray is now.

What is needed is for people of faith to learn to defend themselves and others daily against aggression. There are two general categories of aggressive behavior from a religious standpoint. This is not a clinical point of view. The one type of aggression is ignorant; the other is malicious.

Ignorant aggression is so caught up in selfishness that it justifies violence almost without thinking. Crimes of passion, spontaneous rage, violence due to panic may be examples of ignorant aggression. The human mind did not plan to harm someone. But it is so self-centered and lacking self-control that violence happens before the person thinks. Afterward when reason returns, they fell guilty. They didn't intend to harm or kill anyone. It just happened.

But until the person gains a stronger moral sense, gains self-control and becomes more unselfish, it's like walking in a mine field. One never knows when the carnal mind will explode again. Ignorant doesn't intend to do evil, but it keeps doing it anyway.

Malicious violence knows exactly what it is doing, intends to do harm, and cold-bloodedly implements its violent plan. There is no remorse. The end justifies the means. What the carnal mind decides it needs it will get by whatever means possible. Moral sense has been turned off. Guilt has been banned.

How do we defend ourselves against ignorant and malicious aggression? King Saul is an example of both ignorant and malicious violence. When he realized that David was God's chosen, Saul was jealous. In a jealous rage, he threw a javelin at David to kill him. David handled ignorant aggression by being so alert that he avoided being hit and fled. After this happened again, David left. He didn't continue to allow jealousy to attack him. David handled ignorant violence by being watchful, vigilant and quick to flee. No false loyalty or cunning device lured David into staying.

Saul's ignorant aggression grew into an all-consuming malice. He hunted David for years, trying to kill him. David relied on God to guide and protect him. The Psalms are evidence of David's prayer to God.

Daily prayer is an effective protection. We need to pray daily to be delivered from evil, as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer. Let's not wait for more tragedy before we start praying for the safety of all from malicious and ignorant violence. Prayer does prevent evil from succeeding. But we need to do it. Psalms 140 is one way to start. It begins, "Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man." And ends, "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence."

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