

How to Pray When a Global Virus Is Spreading

Just when we thought America's political divisions couldn't get more vindictive, now people are angry that Vice President Mike Pence had the audacity to pray for God's help to stop the deadly coronavirus.

Last week ,a photo surfaced on newsfeeds of Pence and members of his Coronavirus Task Force bowing in prayer in one of their recent meetings. No audio was provided, but media pundits were quick to skewer the leaders for their show of faith—calling it a hypocritical photo op and using it to lambast Pence for his lack of a medical background.

Thomas Chatterton Williams, who writes for *The New York Times*, offered his below-the-belt jabs by insinuating that the leaders were doing nothing to stop the pandemic other than sitting in a room and praying.

Haters are going to hate. And mockers are going to mock God until Judgment Day. Say what you will about people in the White House praying. You can call them hypocrites. You can ridicule them for their conservative morals. But I'm with Mike Pence on this one. I'm going to pray for this virus to stop because I'm not putting my trust in the government to avert this crisis.

I'm not saying we don't take the necessary precautions. You should wash your hands. You should stay home from work if you're sick. Local and state health departments should get the masks ready and put medical professionals on high alert. We should enact travel bans on affected countries. But at this point, the wisest thing we could ever do is ask Almighty God to extend His mercy and stop this virus from becoming a plague.

I've collected a few Scriptures that I'm using when I pray—because the Bible actually has plenty to say about God's willingness to help us when we face the threat of sickness. I encourage you to use these prayers as you pray for your family, your local area and the nation of China—where most of the coronavirus deaths have occurred so far.

You might even want to print out these 10 Bible verses and post them on your refrigerator or office computer to remind your family, friends and co-workers that you aren't ashamed to ask for divine protection:

Psalms 57:1 (NASB): "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, for my soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by."

Psalms 91:5-6, 9-10: "You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent."

Psalms 5:11: "But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You."

Psalms 34:4: "I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."

Exodus 15:26: "And He said, 'If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the Lord, am your healer.'"

Psalms 55:22: "Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken."

Psalm 56:3: "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."

Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Psalm 34:17: "The righteous cry, and the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Psalm 46:1: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

When the angel of death passed over Egypt, the children of Israel smeared lamb's blood on their doorposts and trusted the Lord to deliver them from the invisible plague. We too can give God our fears and expect Him to protect us. This scare will soon pass over.