

## Are you concerned about safety? A spiritual approach can help

Live online Q&A chat with Beverly Goldsmith, a Christian Science practitioner and teacher, on [spirituality.com](http://spirituality.com) June 27, 2003

An event in the *Spirituality Live Series*

### Event Preview Introduction:

No matter where you live in the world it's hard not to feel concerned about one's personal safety. News of terrorism, the spread of contagious diseases, even savage dog attacks have an unsettling effect on us. So what can we do to be safe?



For me the answer is in the spiritual approach found in Mary Baker Eddy's bestselling book *Science and Health*. I've been reading this book for over 40 years. And one of the greatest things I've learned from it is that there is a divine, loving Power, always present, keeping us safe in dangerous situations. We don't have to be afraid.

This is something the author of *Science and Health* knew about. There were occasions in her life when her personal safety was threatened. One of these occurred when she received a bomb threat at a hall where she was to speak. Another time a man with a gun entered her home. Each time she remained unafraid. She was sure that God was with her keeping her safe. She went ahead and delivered her address. She was also able to disarm the man with the gun. No one was hurt. What Mary Baker Eddy learned of God's protecting power has helped me. Here's an example.

My brother and I sang in Vietnam during the war. One morning our group drove across a strategic bridge that was heavily guarded by US troops. In the afternoon we performed at a military base and received a warm reception. By the time we got back to the bridge it was night. As we neared the guard on duty, the driver suddenly accelerated. We were thrown sideways inside the van. The guard called out "Stop or I'll shoot", but the van increased in speed. We screamed at the driver to stop, but he ignored us and kept going.

Machine gun fire erupted. With a sense of urgency I started to pray, "Dear God, You are here, helping us. You won't let us die on this bridge. You are keeping us safe." When we reached the center of the bridge, our stage manager scrambled forward and grabbed the driver from behind. The van swerved from side-to-side and then came to a stop. The guards at the checkpoint ahead of us then began firing on us. Again I prayed that God would keep us safe. Minutes later our vehicle was surrounded and searched. The driver was taken into custody and our manager drove us home to our village compound. All seven of us in that van were kept safe.

Thinking back on this situation continues to comfort and reassure me. There is a higher power looking after each of us. We don't have to be afraid in the face of potential danger. God's love is like a shield. It protects. It keeps us safe and well. We can feel secure in our homes and elsewhere. God is looking after us. You and I are safe in God's care – no matter what.

Please join me for the question and answer session. I'm looking forward to chatting with you.

## Event Transcript of Q&A:

Beverly's comments came during a live spirituality.com Online Event on June 27, 2003.

She was responding to questions from the audience. Following is a transcript of the discussion:

- Q: 1. Can I ever be safe when there is so much violence in the world?  
2. I'm traveling to Asia and I'm worried about getting sick. How can I pray?  
3. How can I overcome the fear of feeling unsafe when traveling in a small aircraft or boat?  
4. Are you saying that just thinking you're safe keeps you safe?  
5. Prayer gives me comfort ... but the fear always comes back. How can I overcome this?  
6. How can we pray to prevent dogs attacking people in neighborhood streets and parks?  
7. Isn't fear good ... doesn't it help keep us away from danger?  
8. Here in New Zealand there is a background fear of a large natural calamity – earthquake, volcanic eruption. How should we handle this?  
9. How do you pray for peace and safety in the world?  
10. In the US ... we have a big holiday weekend approaching ... and I am a little fearful of terrorist attacks. What should I do?  
11. How can we keep our family safe when we are not with them on their journeys and do not know what is happening?  
12. Are you saying that safety is natural to us?  
13. I don't feel very confident about my praying – what makes the difference between saying it and proving it?  
14. How can we keep safe on the road?  
15. How do I keep my children safe? I can't seem to find peace of mind.  
16. With so much talk about sickness it's easy to see why one could view one's body as an enemy. How does one get a better view of body?

**SPIRITUALITY.COM HOST:** *Hello everyone. We are happy to have Beverly joining us from Australia. Okay Beverly, any opening thoughts to get us started?*

**BEVERLY:** Yes. When we hear about bad things happening like dog attacks, SARS, and terrorist attacks, it can unsettle us – even make us feel afraid for our well-being. But there is a way to feel safe. It's through a spiritual approach to safety. You'll find this approach explained in Mary Baker Eddy's book *Science and Health*. This approach works. I know because it's enabled me to remain safe in Vietnam during the war, on the streets in Australia and around the world, traveling in aircraft and ships. I've been kept safe while in dangerous situations. Other times I've been protected from harm.

From all of this I've learned that it's important not to let fear make you forget that God loves and cares for you. God has kept people like me safe. He can keep you safe too. You have the courage to face danger and fear and beat them. I know that God is with you right now. He will keep you safe.

Let's talk about how a spiritual approach to safety can help you. I'm ready to answer your questions.

### **1. Mal:** *Can I ever be safe when there is so much violence in the world?*

**BEVERLY:** Yes you can. After the Bali bombing many people told how they felt led not to enter the Sari club or go there that evening. Where did the feeling not to go come from? Was it just luck? I don't believe so. There are divine intuitions that keep us safe. These come to each of us. Let me give you an example.

I was in Saigon in 1969 during the Vietnam war. I prayed night and day for my safety, as well as the group I was with. I learned to trust God, to listen for His guidance, to follow the ideas that came to me about our safety.

One evening a few of us were going to eat at a local restaurant. Just before leaving, I felt I couldn't go. I couldn't explain it. But having been protected on other occasions, I decided to follow this intuition and not go. The others tried to persuade me to change my mind. We were arguing – nicely about my attack of "cold feet" when we heard a bomb explode nearby. We ran into the street. To our horror the restaurant had been blown up. If we'd gone ahead we would have been inside. We'd been kept safe.

## 2. Unsure: *I'm traveling to Asia and I'm worried about getting sick. How can I pray?*

**BEVERLY:** I've traveled and worked in Asia. Each time I prayed before I went and while I was there. This statement from Mary Baker Eddy helped. "Good thoughts are an impervious armor; clad therewith you are completely shielded from the attacks of error of every sort. And not only yourselves are safe, but all whom your thoughts rest upon are thereby benefited."

This led me in my prayers to do two things. [1] Keep out of my thinking the fear that disease or food could harm me. [2] Hold to the spiritual truth that divine Love's powerful presence was safeguarding me around the clock.

Praying like this worked. I've found that nothing bad can break through our spiritual defenses. God is with you keeping you healthy and well. God's love is everywhere. Right where you are. This kind of praying has always protected me. It's kept me safe. It can keep you safe too.

## 3. Dawn: *How can I overcome the fear of feeling unsafe when traveling in a small aircraft or boat?*

**BEVERLY:** I overcome this fear through the spiritual idea that God is with me wherever I travel and in whatever I travel. Size of transport doesn't make us more or less safe. Safety comes from understanding that it is divine Love that looks after us.

At one time I was in a 6-seater plane flying over water during a thunderstorm. It was very frightening. I prayed. I thought of God being always with me. It didn't matter whether I was up in a plane or on the ground. Divine Love was with me. I was sure that this divine Power would not let me die. I remained calm. We landed safely.

Another time I was on a small boat sailing to an island off Fiji. A strong wind came up. It was so bad that I started contemplating how far it was to swim to the shore! I thought of how Jesus was calm in a small boat during a storm. He was not afraid. His powerful spiritual thinking actually resulted in the storm abating. I too prayed. I knew that God was in control of the wind and waves. I would not be afraid for my life. We finally reached the island and went ashore. Several hours later when we set out for the mainland again the sea was like a millpond – flat calm.

You can have peace of mind too. You can be unafraid. God is with you – always. Knowing this helps us be fearless whatever we're traveling in.

## 4. Acorn: *Are you saying that just thinking you're safe keeps you safe?*

**BEVERLY:** It's more than just *thinking* you're safe. It's knowing that there is a divine power looking after you. This kind of spiritual thinking that connects us to the divine, keeps us safe. This is more than just positive thinking. It's powerful spiritual thinking that saves and protects us from harm.

## 5. Leggo: *Prayer gives me comfort, but the fear always comes back. How can I overcome this?*

**BEVERLY:** It can seem hard to be fearless when you're in danger.

Everyday as a singer in Vietnam during the war I faced danger. I was often scared for my life. But when I felt afraid, I prayed. I didn't berate myself for feeling afraid. I knew that in *Science and Health* I had an approach that I could employ in each situation. I had the spiritual means to conquer the fear and be safe. The important thing is to DEAL with fear quickly when it pops up.

I deal with fear by reminding myself that divine Love is right there with me. This powerful Love is protecting me. Keeping me safe from harm. I refuse to let fear build up in my thought. I shut the door on fear. I know it's no part of my thinking.

You can do this too. You are safe. Nothing can take away life. Your true identity is spiritual, and it's preserved by divine, infinite, Spirit. If fear about the same thing comes back don't be alarmed. Get right onto praying about it. Keep on practicing shutting fear out of your thinking and letting in thoughts of safety. The more you practice doing this, the quicker you'll be at beating fear. Then you'll find that a fear that keeps coming back to your thinking will cease to do so.

#### **6. Paul: *How can we pray to prevent dogs attacking people in neighborhood streets and parks?***

**BEVERLY:** I've found the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm very helpful. Each verse assures us that we will be safe. We can expect to be saved from such things as terror, disease, destruction, evil, plagues, accidents, and unexpected attacks. The 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm also tells us what we have to do to experience God's protecting power – stay close to God in your thinking and not be afraid. For me this has meant knowing each moment that I am safe in divine Love's care. I don't have to be afraid of being attacked.

Because we've had similar problems here in Australia, I've been praying that dog owners will be responsible. I have a friend who is a dog breeder. She has many good ideas for helping owners train their pets including the importance of socializing the pet with humans and other animals. Many city councils in Australia have laws now about dog ownership. They run dog obedience schools and even classes to help owners to be responsible – especially when taking their dogs to a public park. A number of parks forbid dogs. And a number of others are set aside for dogs to be exercised.

Our prayers for the safety of people and animals can help people find ways of being responsible owners. It can help our governments take wise decisions such as banning certain breeds or the importing of dogs trained to track and kill. We can live in peace with animals. We can be safe with them.

#### **7. Pamela: *Isn't fear good ... doesn't it help keep us away from danger?***

**BEVERLY:** No, fear is never good. It's a negative emotion. Fear clouds our judgment. It makes us timid when we need to be courageous. It prevents us from hearing the spiritual ideas and intuitions that will keep us safe from harm. You keep out of danger through being spiritually positive, not by being negative. I wouldn't rely on negativity to warn me of trouble. You may not know that you're in a threatening situation.

As a young adult I met a fellow at a function and went on a date with him. We were driving in his car when I discovered he was drunk. I asked him to pull over. He became abusive and swerved across the road. Rather than let fear take over my thinking, I stayed spiritually positive. I prayed. I knew that divine Love was with us. This Love was an intelligent force for good. Each person was responsive to divine Love.

Gently I touched his arm, said I needed to get out for a moment and asked him to pull over. As I got out of the car, I prayed to know how to deal with him. When he came around to me, I looked him straight in the eye, asked for the car keys and said I'd drive him home. We calmly got back in his car. As I drove, I prayed. I felt no fear or anger. Suddenly he asked me to stop. He was clear-headed, normal. The intoxication had gone. He apologized, drove me home and we parted company amicably. Fear didn't keep me out of danger. And it wouldn't have helped me in that situation. Only clear, calm, spiritual thinking did. It kept us both safe.

**8. Paul: *Here in New Zealand there is a background fear of a large natural calamity – earthquake, volcanic eruption. How should we handle this?***

**BEVERLY:** I remember once when I was in New Zealand that an earthquake suddenly happened. It was my first time. I had never felt anything like it before and I felt quite scared about it. When I realized what was happening I started to pray for my safety and for those around me. My prayer was that divine Loves was in control and that nothing bad could happen to me.

Whatever happens climate wise, I know that a higher power governs the universe and us. Here in Queensland we have tropical cyclones. These bring much needed rain to this State. What I pray for is that these not be destructive to people. This weather is needed but not in a destructive way. This kind of prayer has had the effect of such a cyclone passing the coast in safe areas.

I'm not scared of storms or earthquakes now because I know that there is a divine Power governing my life and that of those around me.

**9. Jean: *How do you pray for peace and safety in the world?***

**BEVERLY:** Sometimes when it comes to the world we feel that a situation is so big that our one little prayer won't help much. So we don't pray. We feel it's pointless – that our prayer won't change anything. But that's where we're wrong. It's important for us to actually pray for the world. Every prayer helps. No prayer is ever wasted.

Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health*, "The 'still, small voice' of scientific thought reaches over continent and ocean to the globe's remotest bound." That's on page 559.

I think of this as describing the power of prayer and the reach of prayer. Prayer is effective over long distances. Prayer from someone in New Zealand for say the people of Zimbabwe can help. I know that when my mother prayed for me while I was in Vietnam it helped. I've prayed for others around the world and they've been healed.

One time I decided to pray for a certain country with that idea about the "still small voice". I prayed for the safety and well being of the citizens of that country. I really believed that my prayers would help. A few weeks later I received a letter from a person I didn't know living in that country.

The letter was in his language. I had to find someone to translate it for me. It asked if I would pray for him. He didn't know of *Science and Health* so I sent him a copy in his language.

I prayed that divine Love was with him and was keeping him safe. He was guided and guarded by divine Love's powerful protecting presence. Later I heard that he had been protected during the political unrest in his country. Prayer had kept him safe.

**10. Migue: *In the US ... we have a big holiday weekend approaching ... and I am a little fearful of terrorist attacks. What should I do?***

**BEVERLY:** Just recently in Australia we've had a couple of people try to hijack planes. They didn't succeed. People on board were alert. They disarmed the individuals quickly.

While this matter is of concern, it doesn't make me afraid to travel. I like to be proactive when I travel. I pray. I remember that there is a higher Power taking care of me all the time. I know that if any situation arose, that this divine protecting Power will give me or others the right things to say or do. I can remain safe from harm.

There's a Bible story about safety. It's about a man who gets thrown into a den of lions over night. Next morning they let him out. He hasn't been harmed. He's remained safe. This story reminds me that the man wasn't saved **FROM** the danger of a lion's den, but he was certainly saved **IN** the midst of danger. This is possible for you and me too. I've been protected **FROM** danger and I've been protected while **IN** dangerous situations. You can be too. Just be proactive. Pray. Divine Love is with you. You can be fearless.

**11. Dot:** *How can we keep our family safe when we are not with them on their journeys and do not know what is happening?*

**BEVERLY:** Even though you're not with loved ones, you can always pray for them. Pray that divine Love is keeping them safe. That they can listen for the divine intuitions that will keep them out of danger. This is what I do when I travel. I am always aware of that divine Presence with me. Knowing this for family really helps them.

I know that this is what my mother did for my brother and me. When we sang in Vietnam she prayed everyday for us. She knew that we would be protected from harm. Even though she couldn't be with us on our travels she was with us in a more important way. She was with us spiritually – thinking of us and praying for our safety. Her prayers worked. We came home safely after 4 months.

No prayer is ever wasted. Prayer is very powerful. Every good thought for another blesses and helps them.

**12. Honey:** *Are you saying that safety is natural to us?*

**BEVERLY:** Yes I am. Safety is a normal state of affairs. That's because the Divine that created us is always looking after us. This loving Power wants us to be well. Fear, danger, anxiety are not normal. They are abnormalities concerning life. Our true identity is peaceful, safe, healthy and well. It's our divine right to live a secure life free from harm.

This is something you can prove. When you approach life from a spiritual basis you experience peace and good in your life. Also when danger is around you are able to meet it and remain safe.

I've proved this many, many times. In fact during Vietnam hardly a day went by when my life wasn't in danger. But I wasn't scared. I felt quite sure that the spiritual approach in *Science and Health* would keep me safe. And it did. In every circumstance I was kept safe. And not only me but the other 5 members of the show. They saw this protection too and knew that there was a higher Power keeping us safe.

**13. Acorn:** *I don't feel very confident about my praying – what makes the difference between saying it and proving it?*

**BEVERLY:** For me the answer is about putting it into practice. You get confident the more you practice the spiritual ideas that come to you in prayer. For example, if you're praying that divine Love is keeping you safe, then you have to keep this thought uppermost when you're in danger. It's no good forgetting this at the crucial moment. You have to remember this with all your heart at the very moment when you feel afraid.

When you feel afraid, you can do two things. 1. Shut out unhealthy thoughts and fears. 2. Let into your thinking the spiritual fact that divine Love is taking care of you.

Confidence comes from practice. So keep practicing. Then you'll find that you're able to prove it.

#### 14. Barry: *How can we keep safe on the road?*

**BEVERLY:** I like to adopt a spiritual approach to road safety. For me this means knowing that there is a divine intelligence governing and directing me when I'm on the road. This divine Power also looks after everyone else too. I exercise spiritual thinking at the wheel by being alert, vigilant, and careful while on the road. I don't speed. I obey road rules. To me this is abiding by Principle. This divine Principle governs movement and action. If I am obedient to Principle, I am placing myself under the operation and care of divine Principle. If I am disobedient I am placing myself outside of this law of good.

At one time I used to leave home late for appointments. This meant that often I had to exceed the speed limit to get there on time. One day after a lot of bad press about traffic accidents, I was thinking about how to keep safe on the road. I knew that divine Love was with me keeping me safe. But then I realized that I had to play my part too. There was a code of behavior on the road and road-rules to follow. I saw that when drivers obeyed these rules and etiquette, traffic moved safely along our roads. I decided to change my behavior. I left home earlier so that I didn't have to exceed the speed limit. I haven't had an accident in over 30 years of driving.

The spiritual approach to safety that I learned about in *Science and Health* has shown me how to be a responsible driver on the road.

#### 15. Kiwi: *How do I keep my children safe? I can't seem to find peace of mind.*

**BEVERLY:** One way is to pray for them each day. Your prayers for your children are a great help to them. Prayer works. Researchers and scientists are proving this. Knowing that God is with your children at school or where ever they are will help keep them safe. You can also teach your children to pray for themselves. Let me give you an example.

As a child, my family camped at a beach. One day my brother and I were racing each other back to camp. I wanted to beat him so I accepted a lift from a stranger. We'd only been driving a few minutes when he started acting strangely. I was scared. I decided to pray. I knew that God is Love. He loves us. He takes care of us. If we're in trouble we can pray to God. So I said, "Please God, I'm sorry that I got in the car. But I need your help. You're looking after me. I'm not alone. You'll get me home safely." Praying gave me the courage to ask the man to stop and let me out – which he did. I hid in the bushes in case he came back. After waiting a long time, I walked back down the road. My parents found me. My mother told me that she'd seen me get in the car and she'd prayed as she ran to get help. She asked God to keep me safe. And He did.

God's love has kept me safe many times since then. God's love keeps you and your children safe too. If you want to learn how to pray you can read the chapter on prayer in *Science and Health*. There are many good ideas in it on how to pray successfully.

#### 16. JOY: *With so much talk about sickness it's easy to see why one could view one's body as an enemy. How does one get a better view of body?*

**BEVERLY:** To me the body is a beautiful, useful, spiritual idea that's governed and maintained by divine Spirit. Instead of thinking of it as an enemy I like to embrace it in my thoughts and know that it is healthy and well.

Mary Baker Eddy says, "You embrace your body in your thought, and you should delineate upon it thoughts of health, not of sickness." (S&H 208:29) This tells me that to keep the body healthy I need to stop fearing that something bad can happen to it. Body is identity and I know that my true identity is purely spiritual, healthy and well.

It's my divine right to be healthy and well. This takes away the fear that the body can just break down or be sick when it wants to. What we experience comes through our thinking. So we need to think spiritually and this keeps us well.

This is what I've learned, and this understanding comes from reading *Science and Health*. In this book you learn the spiritual approach to self-care and healing.

**Spirituality.com Host:** *Well, we are almost out of time Beverly ... are there any closing thoughts you can leave us with?*

**BEVERLY:** Thanks for your great questions.

The spiritual approach to safety that we've talked about does work. You can learn more by getting a copy of *Science and Health* and reading it. I've no doubt that you'll find the book a source of comfort and strength.

No matter what situation comes up there is no need to be afraid. God is right there with you. He is keeping you safe. He will protect you from harm. He will preserve your life. This is not only true for you but for your family too.

**Spirituality.com Host:** *Wow ... that was a quick hour ... thanks so much Beverly, and thanks to all of you for your great questions. Have a good weekend everyone!*

Passages in this chat:

King James Bible:

Psalm 91

Mark 4: 35-40

*Science and Health:*

559: 8-10

208: 29-31

*The First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany:*

210: 7-11