

Courage to fight crime

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Whenever something disturbs the usual tranquillity of our neighborhood, or we hear about crime in our district, my family and I turn to God in prayer. We've learned that prayer is practical and leads to healing. We've also found that the law of God, understood and obeyed, supports us in doing what's right under the circumstances and in resolving community troubles.

A previously quiet house across the road from ours started to receive many visitors both day and night. When semitrailers started pulling up at odd hours, we felt uneasy. A discussion with several neighbors revealed that others had noticed the unusual level of activity and were worried as well. We weren't sure, but the consensus was that drugs were being distributed from the property.

But even though people were concerned, they were also afraid. No one was willing to take action. When the situation worsened, a neighbor came to me and said it was time we reported to the police what was happening. And she asked me to make the call. I said I'd like to think about it. I must admit that I felt apprehensive.

I recalled reading these words: "This material world is even now becoming the arena for conflicting forces. On one side there will be discord and dismay; on the other side there will be Science and peace." Then the book continues, "During this final conflict, wicked minds will endeavor to find means by which to accomplish more evil; but those who discern Christian Science will hold crime in check. They will aid in the ejection of error. They will maintain law and order, and cheerfully await the certainty of ultimate perfection" (*Science and Health*, pp. 96-97).

I realized that my neighborhood was experiencing these "conflicting forces," So, what side was I on? Would I ignore the problem, allow the fear and unhappiness to continue, and in effect take the side of evil and discord? Or was I going to find a solution, was I going to pray, perhaps alert the authorities, whatever it took to take a solid stand for the side of good and peace?

I decided to pray, and it went something like this: "Father, show me what is the right thing to do for our community. I know that evil in any form is never a good thing. Criminality is no part of You, and so it has no rightful place in the lives of Your children. You have endowed all of us with peace, and freedom from the desire to do wrong. We don't have to endure what is not right or good. While I'm not in the business of condemning others, I do know that sin is not inherent in anyone's God-given nature. It's therefore important that I take a stand against corrupt thinking, rebuking it in my own consciousness. I will not turn a blind eye to what I know is wrong. Evil is not in accord with Your laws. Help me to be strong and choose Your side, the side of good."

Feeling assured, I called the authorities. Later that very same day those involved in the criminal activity were apprehended. Drugs, as it turned out, were removed from the premises. How grateful I was to God for giving me the strength and guidance to follow through on doing what was right and needed.

Several hours later, however, my confidence momentarily faltered when someone said I'd been a fool. Didn't I know that I would be found out by the drug dealers, and it would soon be payback time? As I reached out to God again, the first verse of a hymn came to thought.

I love Thy way of freedom, Lord,
 To serve Thee is my choice,
In Thy clear light of Truth I rise
 And, listening for Thy voice,
I hear Thy promise old and new,
 That bids all fear to cease:
My presence still shall go with thee
 And I will give thee peace.
(*Christian Science Hymnal*, No. 136)

Right away this strengthening message lifted all sense of fear. It gave me courage. I had done what I *knew* in my heart was right. I had taken a stand for law and order. I would not be harmed, because God was with me, protecting me from evil intentions. In the days that followed, I went about my activities with quiet trust in God's care. As the time passed into months, I realized that nothing bad had happened to me. Nor was I going to imagine that something evil might happen in the future.

Since that time long ago, my neighborhood has remained free from criminal activity. This has proved to me that when we choose to side with God, good, we can bring peace to our neighborhoods and keep them safe.