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## Prayer: reliable protection from flu

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There are concerns that Indonesian avian influenza, or “bird flu,” could become a pandemic—an epidemic that spreads widely. Experts predict it could hit Australia, Indonesia’s nearest neighbor. Comparisons are being made with the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, which spread worldwide. And with that in mind, there are calls for governments around the world to stockpile vaccine.

These forecasts are unsettling. Drug companies are urging consumers to start using their treatments now. But is a drug the only form of protection? And if you can’t get the drug, does that mean you’re vulnerable to the disease?

I don’t think so. In the late 1960s, I worked in Vietnam, an Asian country where malaria, yellow fever, black plague and several other contagious diseases were rampant. My colleagues and I were urged to take anti-malaria tablets and other medication every day for our protection.

While the rest of the group was happy to do so, I decided to rely on Christian Science—a system of prayer-based prevention and cure that I’d learned about from Mary Baker Eddy’s book *Science and Health*.

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### *I prayed proactively for my well-being.*

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Since I’d begun studying this book, along with the Bible, I’d experienced several healings of chronic ailments through Christian Science treatment. So I felt confident that I could rely on this healing system for my health and protection. In doing so, I wasn’t ignoring the warnings about infectious diseases—far from it. Each day I prayed proactively about my well-being.

I affirmed that God, Spirit, was the only Creator of man and the universe. He had made me well and He was keeping me well. I was safe in His powerful care. He did not make disease, so I didn’t have to give my mental consent to catching it. I didn’t have to be afraid. I could remain calm and confident that divine Love was able and willing to preserve my health.

This verse from the 91st Psalm was particularly comforting: “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”

This Biblical promise of continued wellness reminded me that I could be fearless about infection. I didn’t have to agree with the notion that I could become ill and perhaps die.

I had a choice. I could believe in, accept and expect to experience divine Love’s protective power.

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### *Contagious disease is spread through fear.*

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This wasn’t blind faith on my part, or a Pollyanna view of my situation. Through deep study of the Bible and *Science and Health*, I’d learned that contagion is rooted in fear and is spread through fear. It is also spread through common consent—that is, the acceptance that illness can be caught through contact with diseased people, animals or insects. I decided not to agree with this notion.

I recalled this statement in *Science and Health*: “Disease arises, like other mental conditions, from association. Since it is a law of mortal mind that certain diseases should be regarded as contagious, this law obtains credit through association,—calling up the fear that creates the image of disease and its consequent manifestation in the body. This fact in metaphysics is illustrated by the following incident: A man was made to believe that he occupied a bed where a cholera patient had died. Immediately the symptoms of this disease appeared, and the man died. The fact was, that he had not caught the cholera by material contact, because no cholera patient had been in that bed.”

The realization that disease was a mental state, manifested on the body through fear, guided my prayers. Each day I affirmed that I was God’s daughter, made perfectly healthy and well in His likeness. My individuality did not include sickness. Disease was not me. God made me disease-free and He kept me disease-free. My true identity was fearless and spiritual.

I felt utterly certain that I could go about my work with immunity. And that’s what happened. During my time in Vietnam, I

remained totally well—and I have stayed that way.

Now, as I hear the news about bird flu, I remain calm and quietly confident. I know that the spiritual truths that previously protected me from illness can do so again. Right now, I'm being proactive with daily prayers for myself, family and friends, as well as people around the world. I'm prayerfully wrapping everyone in God's protecting power, where I know they remain safe from harm.

[Read more on this topic in the special feature "Bird flu: a spiritual response"](#)

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*Prayerful protection from disease:*

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**Science and Health:**

[154:3-15](#)

[196:25](#)

[392:24](#)

**King James Bible:**

[Ps. 91:9, 10](#)

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