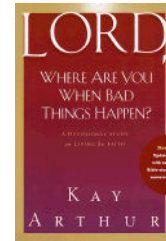


“5 Things to Do When Tragedy Strikes”

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.



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Like a bolt of lightning on a starless, cloudless night, tragedy strikes. In the twinkling of an eye, it cuts to the heart and crushes security in the soul, leaving a trail of confusion in its wake. It's easy to see why an unbeliever would be devastated by a sudden, seemingly senseless tragedy, but a Christian should know better, right? After all, we have the Lord on our side – not to mention His promise that He would never allow us to experience more than we could endure.

Well, guess what? Christians are human, too. And the reality is, tragedy isn't interested in your walk of faith or your devotion to God. Tragedy strikes suddenly and decisively; it's up to us how we deal with what it leaves behind.

Kay Arthur, the woman who along with her husband, Jack, developed the Inductive Bible Study Method, has a series of books that tackle some of the more common questions Christians ask. I came across her book called, *Lord, Where Are You When Bad Things Happen?*

Studying the book, I jotted down some notes under this heading –

“5 Things to Do When Tragedy Strikes”

- 1. Remain Calm.** As basic as this might seem, I'm always amazed at the number of dangerous decisions people try to make in the moments immediately following a tragedy. Jesus wants us to be slow to speak, quick to listen and slow to anger. The same holds true when tragedy strikes. Holding your tongue might just keep you from losing your head later.
- 2. Utilize Your Support System.** Friends and family members should contact those “special people” in their life and then start leaning on them for support. The death of a spouse, parent or child, for example, is hard enough to deal with. Let your support system deal with some of the other, less important details while you grieve your tragedy.
- 3. Acknowledge What Really Happened.** It's not uncommon for a person to go into shock in the face of tragedy. That's why it's important to be able to fully understand what happened (e.g. your son was in a car accident; your home was burglarized; vandals defaced the church sanctuary). No sense in trying to deal with an imagined crisis when the real thing still needs to be addressed.
- 4. Remember that God is in Control.** God will never allow His children to be tested beyond what anyone can bear. Tragedies often bring many of our deepest fears and inadequacies to

the surface. Trust your Heavenly Father. Let Him carry you through each step of what appears to be a really tragic situation. He has the big picture in mind (Romans 8:28).

- 5. Pray.** It's as basic to the Christian as oxygen and breathing are to the human body. But, in the midst of tragedy, it's perfectly normal to "hyperventilate" a bit. Let the Son of God enfold you with His Spirit and His love. Pray each step of the way through your difficult situation. Pray with friends and remember to let them pray for you as well. God created us for each other to have community and relationship with one another. A brother is born for adversity, and sometimes, a brother is born from a tragedy, too.

Keep this list somewhere you can find it relatively easily (like in your Bible or on your refrigerator). It won't make the pain of a tragedy go away, but it can make difficult circumstances much easier to deal with.

(Click [here](#) for information on how you can receive a copy of Kay Arthur's outstanding book for helping teenagers deal with tragedy. It's called, [Lord, Where Are You When Bad Things Happen?](#))

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