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I can hardly type those eight words, let alone believe them. That's right, I said *two of my good friends do not believe in God*, which they have admitted to me, knowing of my sturdy faith.

What do I do with that? Pray for them, certainly. Yet truly, I feel sad for them.

I want to respect it – yet I cannot. I don't wish to judge it – yet I do.

The first time I had learned that my friend, Mary, did not have faith, was on the beach near my second home in Florida. We were watching the sunset as her 6-year-old son played in the sand. On the beach ... in nature ... watching a stunning orange and yellow Gulf sunset ... can we feel any closer to God than that? To me, that IS God. In that scenario, I feel one with God. That's how I explained it to Mary.

"I don't feel that," she said.

My eyeballs nearly dropped out of my head and my mouth stayed ajar for a few minutes ... **WHATTTTT? No faith? But you're such a good person!**

C'mon ... here is a nice Irish Catholic girl whose native Ireland mother biblically named her four kids: John, Paul, Mary and Ann. My friend was named after the Blessed Mother! And she doesn't believe in God? What happened? (Her devout Catholic mother must be turning over in her grave with agitation.)

After our chat, she asked me to pray for her, which certainly threw me into a whirl. *Wait, how can you ask that if you don't believe in prayer, faith and God himself?* Contradictory? And, she and her son have sat at my dining room table over dinner as I said the blessing and we all held hands. Contradictory – or merely tolerant?

No matter, I pray for her anyhow.

More than feeling distraught for her – since she is an adult who is capable of deciding things for herself – I feel sorrowful for her son who will not be taught about God and is powerless to opt for himself at this young age – without first receiving the knowledge.

Then there is our other mutual Florida friend who believes in other theories that has zero to do with God, his creation of the world and our faith in him.

WHATTTTT? You have no faith either? But you're such a good person, too!

No matter, I pray for her anyhow.

Admittedly, I struggle with having this information about my two good friends. I love them. I enjoy their company. They are good people. We have excellent conversations, we laugh, and we participate in nice activities together in our beach town. I so wish they believed. And I am still not sure what to do with it. I will continue to pray, of course.

I do know this ... we have no power in other people's spaces. But God does.