

CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

How to Help Our Nation Survive

2 Chronicles 7:12–22



LET'S BEGIN HERE

What can we do for our country? We can pay taxes, vote, obey the laws, and defend the nation against invaders. These are worthwhile contributions, but there must be something more — something deeper.

Today, our nation is fighting for its survival. Threatening us, however, are not the “usual” social diseases that torment underdeveloped countries — poor sanitation, poverty, starvation. Ours is a struggle of the soul, with cancerous sin spreading insidiously through our nation’s vital organs. Every day, another family collapses from compromised morality, another business dies from a lack of ethics, another young person falls because of weakened values.

What can we do for our country? How can we help our nation survive? These questions are too personal to be relegated to a president to answer. We must turn to our Maker for His wise counsel.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. A Day of Dedication (2 Chronicles 7:1–3)

Solomon, the son of King David, had just completed the temple that his father had only dreamed about. God’s permanent house was ready for habitation.

While the king and the people were making sacrifices to welcome God’s glory into the new temple, an army of priests carried the ark of the covenant into the Holy of Holies. Solomon then lifted his hands in an ardent prayer, dedicating the temple and the nation to the Lord’s service. And the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

King Solomon’s heart must have pounded with pride as he went to bed that night. What an accomplishment! He had “successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace” (2 Chronicles 7:11).



Quotable

*Changed hearts are
not accomplished
through the
marble-walled
rooms on
Capitol Hill.
It takes Christ.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. A Night of Visitation (2 Chronicles 7:12–22)

Suddenly, the Lord appeared to Solomon. During this encounter, the Lord chose three subjects to counsel the king about: the temple, the people, and Solomon himself.

- **God's House (2 Chronicles 7:12)**

God called the temple “a house of sacrifice,” perhaps to remind Solomon of its purpose. This was a place of meeting, where contrite souls could find mercy and where God in His holiness could embrace His people. The doors of this house must always be open and the sacrifices always burning—sacrifices of animals, of praise, of prayer.

The temple was where people could come to experience God personally. Centuries later, though Solomon's building was gone, Jesus nevertheless respected the temple for its original purpose—a house of prayer (Matthew 21:13–14).

- **God's Nation (2 Chronicles 7:13–16)**

In the days ahead, the spirit of celebration would most likely fade, and the people would be tempted to start drifting away from the Lord. If that should happen, God might have to test His nation with drought, famine, and plague. How could the nation survive?

God expected four things from His people (2 Chronicles 7:14):

The attitude of a servant—“humble themselves”

A spirit of dependence—“and pray”

A willingness to wait—“seek My face”

A response of obedience—“turn from their wicked ways”

In return, God promised that their prayers would get His attention and that He would forgive their sin and heal the nation as He saw the people changing the direction of their lives.

- **God's Leader (2 Chronicles 7:17–22)**

The Lord offered Solomon two futures, each showing how his spiritual walk would potentially influence the nation: in one hand, the Lord extended a gracious promise; in the other, a serious warning.

Which would be Solomon's destiny? It depended on one thing: his desire to walk with God.



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LET'S LIVE IT

Spiritual Survival: Then and Now

Although our situation differs from Solomon's in many ways, the United States is not ancient Israel; God's Spirit dwells within believers rather than in a temple—but the principles are the same. Like ancient Israel, we have enjoyed God's blessings during our nation's more than two hundred years of existence. However, it is clear that we have drifted from our former commitment to be "one nation under God." Could we be in danger of forfeiting God's blessing?

If God paid us an unexpected visit, what counsel would He offer? Probably, it would be similar to the survival instructions He gave Solomon: humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from wickedness. There is healing in that simple message.

It won't be accomplished in the paneled rooms of government, in judges' chambers, voting booths, or city council meetings. It must be done by "My people who are called by My name."

List some specific ways you can pray for your nation and its leaders to seek God and obtain healing.



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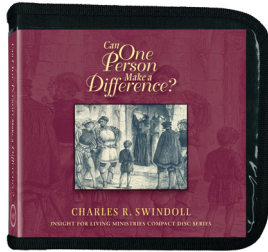
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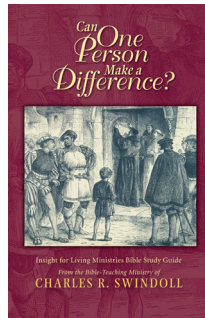


Tools for Digging Deeper



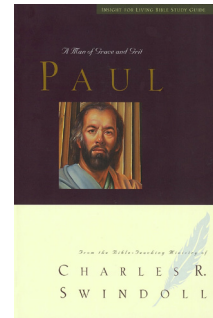
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