

# What 'Acts of God' Are—And What They're Not

Acts of God, what are they? We are accustomed to hearing the local newscaster declare a natural disaster as an act of God. But is it really? Is that an accurate forecast?

When society no longer believes that Satan exists or that hell is an actual place, then they would blame the Creator for these destructive events. When they say that there are many roads that lead to salvation then there is confusion about who God is. And therefore, humankind makes their own gods and anyone's description of the nature and character of their god is confused and accepted as the one, true God.

And sad to say, there are many Christians who do not study the Bible for themselves and do not know who God is or what His acts really are. So they blame the tragedy in life as God's will and turn bitter toward Him.

Is God responsible for tragedies? His Word tells us in John 10:10, *"The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* The thief is Satan, and he comes to steal, to kill and to destroy us, and he causes tragedies to destroy us and our loved ones. I use John 10:10 to judge any situation that is before me. If the circumstance brings any form of destruction, then I know Satan is responsible. This verse helps to keep life simple, and truth also sets us free (John 8:32).

Jesus warns us in John 16:33, *"I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."* He is forewarning us that in this fallen world we will pass through difficulties, but to be of good cheer. He's not making

light of the situation, but instead reveals to us the safe place—in Him we will have peace.

In Luke 5:12-16, we read about a man that was full of a plague called leprosy. This plague was deadly, and incurable. And by the powers of faith, love and compassion, He cleansed the man and made Him whole again.

Today, there are many plagues in this world, especially as we are nearing closer to the return of Jesus. The enemy is fighting against humankind, lurking in every corner to bring destruction, but Jesus on the other hand, wills to make us whole by delivering us from plagues. Plagues are part of the curse, and Jesus delivered us from the effects of all forms of the curse, by transforming into the curse for us. Galatians 3:13, *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us—as it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’”*

In Luke 8:43-48, we read about a woman that had a problem that no one knew how to cure. She was bleeding for 12 years and was slowly dying. But with Him all things are possible, including cures for the human body when the medical field does not know what to do.

First John 3:8 tells us why Jesus came to this earth, *“Whoever practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”* By His blood, Jesus dissolved the power of Satan and all of his evil ways over us.

Matthew 8:23-27 recalls the amazing testimony of how Jesus calms the wind and the waves. And He wills to do the same for us and through us, whether the storms are spiritual, emotional or physical. He gives to us His authority over Satan and all of his wicked works in Luke 10:19: *“Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power*

*of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you.”*

A few acts of God we can see through these verses are:

1. He is a life-giver and wills to give life to us in abundance.
2. He is a peace-giver even during difficult times.
3. He provides a safe place in Him during tribulations.
4. He wills to cleanse us from modern-day plagues.
5. He is able to cure the incurable.
6. He dissolves the power of Satan over us by the power of His blood.
7. He shares His authority with us over Satan and all of his wicked works.

Though the World and even some of God’s people may falsely accuse God of being responsible for tragedies, sickness, disease, plagues and deadly weather, and call these tribulations “acts of God,” we who choose to seek the truth of God’s Word can see these accusations are false, and that in reality He is the giver of life, and gives life to us in abundance. {eoa}

**Becky Dvorak** is a prophetic healing evangelist and the Destiny Image author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and, soon to be released, The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

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## **What the Bible Has to Say About Your Role as a Woman**

*“You don’t have to believe everything in the Bible because it was written by men in a male-oriented culture.”*

*“I refuse to believe in something that refuses to believe in*

me.”

These are just a couple of things women are saying about the Bible. And yet, as Dr. Ravi Zacharias explains in the video below, “There is no other worldview that gives the respect to womanhood that Jesus does.”

Watch this eight-minute video titled “Atheism, Feminism and the Bible” and see for yourself. Then, let me know how you know would answer the question. Does the Bible believe in women? (You’d make my day if you included Scripture to back up your answer!)

© 2001-2016 *Revive Our Hearts* Paula Hendricks Marsteller is the Writing & Editorial Manager for Revive Our Hearts and the author of *Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Girl: On Her Journey from Neediness to Freedom. There’s nothing she loves to share more than the gospel-centered truths that have so transformed her own life: what it means on a daily basis to be “dead to sin, alive to God, and in Christ Jesus.”* Paula and her husband, Trevor, make their home in New York.

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## **Simple Ways to Shed Oppressive Stress**

Stress—we all have it. It is a normal part of life. It can either help us get a job or a task done or it can cause us to deny the job that should be accomplished is even is stress you cause yourself by unnecessarily worrying and stress that is heaped on you from circumstances that seem beyond your control. Either are enough to make me holler, “Calgon, take me

away!”

Let’s take the second one first. I just like to mess with your mind that way!

Stress that appears to be something we can’t control usually falls in the categories of medical, financial, career, family and relationship issues.

## **Stress Issues**

Medical issues are difficult to manage. If you or someone you love has been given a terminal diagnosis, for instance, there may be little you can do to change it. Diseases can overtake us at any time. Accidents do happen.

Financial problems can hound us day and night, if it’s not creditors calling is worry about when they will start calling or if we are going to return home to an eviction notice. It may feel like we are running only a half step ahead of disaster.

Career or work difficulties can implode in seconds. One day you are working and everything is going fine, and the next you are laid off because the company is going broke and although there were signs, you never thought it would come to this.

Probably one of the most stressful categories is family and relationship issues. Of course, if the problem is with someone you live with whether a family member, significant other or roommate, it’s difficult to get away from. The stress can appear to be relentless.

Although each of these can be categorized as things done to us, how we relate to them can be undue stress we cause ourselves.

## **What Is Stress?**

The dictionary says stress is “a state of mental tension and

worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc.” In actuality, how much tension we have over the various difficulties in our life depends on how much we allow ourselves to worry about them.

If we are overly worried about what will happen to our health, it can actually cause our health to decline. On the flip side, stress can motivate us to improve our medical chances by eating healthier and exercising more regularly.

In other words, stress does not have to be negative. It can help us accomplish what we need to get done. However some people run to things that hurt them in order to cope with stress. Among the list of maladaptive ways of coping are drugs, pain medicines, alcohol, smoking and, of course, eating.

### **How We Handle Stress Matters**

It goes without saying that all of these can make stress worse instead of better. However, there are ways of managing stress without going crazy or, in my case, crazier than I already am.

Individuals all handle stress differently. However, if a person has good nutrition, good overall health, fitness and emotional well-being and gets the proper amount of sleep and rest, they will be better able to handle stress.

The problem is we short-circuit this by overeating, staying up late, worrying and obsessing.

Everyone worries to some degree. To obsess about it means it takes over your thought process. Your brain can't get away from it and constantly goes in endless circles trying to change the situation, circumstance or person you feel has caused the situation.

One of the first steps in ending obsession and stress is to change your relationship with the situation, circumstance or

person. You can't change them, but you can change yourself.

## **Positive Ways to Handle Stress**

Can you do something positive instead of negative in stressful times? Instead of overthinking and going in endless cycles can you pray, meditate, practice deep breathing or journal your thoughts?

Can you symbolically take the things you are worrying about and put them in a box or on a shelf and put your mind on a task that will be beneficial such as something you can work on, a hobby you enjoy or a sports activity you love?

Find one small thing you can accomplish that will make you feel better about yourself. Organize your closet. Clean out a drawer. Organize the spice rack. Plan your menus. Balance your checkbook. Wash, dry, fold and put away a load of laundry. Clean the garage. Plant flowers. Paint a picture. Rearrange the furniture.

Can you listen to calming music, listen to a good message or read Scripture?

Ah, speaking of Scripture, look up all the verses on worry. Here are a few to get you started.

### **Read Scripture**

"Who among you by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature?" (Matt. 6:27).

"Therefore, take no thought about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take thought about the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the trouble thereof" (Matt. 6:34).

"Heaviness in the heart of man makes it droop, but a good word makes it glad" (Prov. 12:25).

"Take away anger from your heart, and remove distress from

your body, for youth and the dawn are vanity” (Eccl. 11:10).

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God” (Phil. 4:6).

## **Pray**

It is so true, you can do nothing about your problems, situations, circumstances or people by worrying about them. Give them to God and leave them there.

When you find yourself worrying a problem over and over in your mind, just say, “Father, is there something I need to do in regard to this?” Do whatever He tells you or shows you to do.

If there is nothing, then say, “Father, I give this problem to You. I will not worry about it any more.”

Remember this, worry is praying to yourself. You cannot change the situation. You can only change the way you respond to the situation.

Let it go into the hands of a very capable Father God.

Now, go take a good long soaking bath and then, go do something where you can make a difference! {eoa}

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# Breaking Your Child's Screen Addiction Once and for All

When is the last time you highlighted an article so much that the whole thing was yellow when you were finished? For me, it was just yesterday. I read the new report on "Media and Young Minds" from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Like many people, I am very concerned about the number of young children I see using old phones and iPads of various sizes. Even if the game being played is developmentally age-appropriate, it still grieves me. These children are with adults who could be interacting with them. They could be learning from others and bonding with people. They're being allowed to be self-absorbed and self-centered.

For example, on Friday, a young boy was walking in a crowded airport while playing a game on a mini iPad. If I wouldn't have moved, he would have walked right into me. The adults with him seemed oblivious. Or they were aware but weren't concerned. Or they were aware but gave up trying to change his behavior.

I grieve for the adults too. They seem to be choosing something easy—children who entertain themselves—rather than something better: interacting with children. Adults are missing out on the bonding too.

Perhaps you read my book *Screens and Teens* and are aware of the five big lies technology use is teaching our young people. Partly because of these lies, the longer we wait before exposing children to technology, the better.

But there are many reasons to delay and avoid technology use

altogether. And when using it, there are important guidelines to follow. Very important!

Allow me to highlight a few conclusions from the report. For example, you'll read about the value of interacting with kids while they're using technology. Maybe the finding that children's obedience improves when parents decrease their own technology use will appeal to you. Or how about the dangers of always using technology to soothe children? The statements about this common occurrence are among the most important, in my opinion.

I pray the following will be thought-provoking. I pray you'll consider making changes if they seem appropriate. Please share this post with those in your circle of influence you may be concerned about. For those who want to read the entire policy statement, it is available [here](#).

- "Children younger than 2 years need hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers to develop their cognitive, language, motor, and social-emotional skills. Because of their immature symbolic, memory, and attentional skills, infants and toddlers cannot learn from traditional digital media as they do from interactions with caregivers, and they have difficulty transferring that knowledge to their 3-dimensional experience. The chief factor that facilitates toddlers' learning from commercial media (starting around 15 months of age) is parents watching with them and reteaching the content."
- "It is important to emphasize to parents that the higher-order thinking skills and executive functions essential for school success, such as task persistence, impulse control, emotion regulation and creative, flexible thinking, are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play, as well as responsive parent-child interactions."
- "Heavy parent use of mobile devices is associated with

fewer verbal and nonverbal interactions between parents and children and may be associated with more parent-child conflict. Because parent media use is a strong predictor of child media habits, reducing parental media use and enhancing parent-child interactions may be an important area of behavior change.”

- “For parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media, advise that they choose high-quality programming/apps and use them together with children, because this is how toddlers learn best. Letting children use media by themselves should be avoided.”
- “In children older than 2 years, limit media to one hour or less per day of high-quality programming. Recommend shared use between parent and child to promote enhanced learning, greater interaction and limit setting.
- “Avoid digital media use (except video-chatting) in children younger than 18 to 24 months.”
- “For children ages 18 to 24 months of age, if you want to introduce digital media, choose high-quality programming and use media together with your child. Avoid solo media use in this age group.”
- “For children 2 to 5 years of age, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programming, co-view with your children, help children understand what they are seeing, and help them apply what they learn to the world around them.”
- “Avoid using media as the only way to calm your child. Although there are intermittent times (e.g., medical procedures, airplane flights) when media is useful as a soothing strategy, there is concern that using media as strategy to calm could lead to problems with limit setting or the inability of children to develop their own emotion regulation.”

Your thoughts? Maybe go back and skim these points and choose some to think more about. Or read the short report to see what

else the authors recommend. What might you want to implement? What will you do? And what have you been doing well regarding technology? Feel good about it! {eoa}

**Dr. Kathy Koch** is *the author of Screens & Teens: Connecting With Our Kids in a Wireless World.*

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## **Discovering the Unique Colors God Used to Create You**

We do a lot of coloring in my first-year Spanish class. It's partly because markers make me happy and partly because my first-year students are learning basic vocabulary that lends itself to association with pictures.

On Monday, I gave my students a primary color wheel, with a few empty circles down on the bottom where they could combine two colors to make a new one.

Amarillo + rojo = anaranjado. (Yellow and red make orange.)

Sometimes it happens that I give students a plain assignment for easy points, but they catch me off guard. That is what happened on Monday.

As I scratched five points on the top of each page, I slowed down and began to smile and then to worship the Lord and smile some more.

Every page was unique.

Some students had colored in the spaces. Some had outlined. Some had used geometric designs. The assignment was a basic design at a kindergarten level, but God's design of my

students was not so ordinary. I saw the Lord's own masterful art come through the minds and hands of each person in my class.

Home Depot gave me permission to take one of each of their paint swatches. I taped each of the colored squares together and hung the line of colors on my classroom door. In class, we talked about the 12 primary, secondary and tertiary colors, the few basic hues that combine to make so many different color swatches.

From primary colors came the subtle shire green on my dining room wall and the antique white in my guest bathroom and the latte in my bedroom.

In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul tells us this astounding truth:

*"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good."*

This verse falls in the middle of Paul's instruction on spiritual gifts. Every follower of Christ is given a spiritual gift, through which the Spirit of God manifests (reveals) Himself.

When I read that verse, I picture the Lord with a box of markers and a plain person, except when God is done mixing colors, we are not plain any longer. The benefit people receive when we use our spiritual gift, is being able to see a unique picture of who God is.

You have the same Christ in you as I do, but I will see him in a new way because of what he does through your hands of service, just as you see God in a new way when you are on the receiving end of my service to the Lord.

If you are feeling ordinary and of little value, I give you the assignment of going to a paint store with 1 Corinthians 12:7 written on a sticky note in your purse. Look at all the

colors that come out of the primary hues. Ask the Lord how He wants to show Himself to the body of Christ in a unique way through your special gifts.

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## **How One Woman Says She Celebrates Halloween Without Compromising Faith**

As we near the Halloween season, many raise questions about whether to celebrate the holiday or not.

For some, these questions extend even beyond Halloween, encompassing Christmas and Easter, in an effort to distance themselves from all things pagan.

If we were to distance ourselves from all things pagan, we'd barely be able to exist in this present culture at all.

To be sure, Halloween's origins are dark, pagan and demonic. I could go into a huge history lesson here, but it really would not serve the purpose for what I want to share. I think the majority of us know Halloween's Celtic origins, how Jack-o-lanterns came to be, why they dressed up and so on.

Additionally, I think we could all agree that the way Halloween is currently celebrated hardly at all resembles the way it was originally celebrated. It is commercialized and I'd argue that most parents are not focused on the pagan aspects of the holiday; they simply want their children to have a good time.

When the topic comes up among Christians, the opinions are varied and deeply rooted. Some are so steadfastly convinced

that all Christians should completely ignore the day, along with any kids who come calling.

The Bible does command us to reject—indeed flee from—evil, specifically demons, witches and witchcraft in all its forms.

And to a degree, Halloween falls into that category.

Yet, it begs the question that if we as believers so reject Halloween as a day, refuse to open our door to trick-or-treating kids, or allow our churches to be a safe haven for those who would otherwise be on the streets, are we missing out on an opportunity to share Christ's love?

Did Jesus literally turn away sinners in an effort to broadcast a message about sin?

Did Jesus isolate Himself from unbelievers in an effort to protect Himself from pagan customs? And let us not forget that in His day paganism abounded—as did every other form of wicked behavior.

If our quest is to be like Him, let us look to His behavior as an example of how we ought to respond when faced with paganism, evil and even wickedness in our culture.

I am not proposing that we “be like the world to win the world.” I reject that statement in every form. I do not believe that compromise ever brings results.

However, the church can and should capitalize upon every opportunity presented to bring the gospel to the lost.

So I challenge my readers this year to consider how you might use Halloween to reach out to your neighbors and those you usually do not get a chance to talk with. Consider doing a Harvest Party at your church and advertise your facility as a safe place for children to have fun. They will be out trick-or-treating one way or another. Isn't this a great opportunity to do an outreach to children and their parents?

Don't just ignore Halloween—turn into an opportunity. Be proactive! {eoa}

**Rosilind Jukic**, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call* where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

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## Why This Church Shut Down Its Kids Ministry

The two girls, their brother and their parents were about 10 rows in front of me. During the first worship song, the dad realized his young son was seated, distracted and not singing.

What happened next is one of the best things I've seen in a long time. The dad got his wife's attention and, by pointing, communicated his concern. She gently helped their son to his feet. Then she guided him to switch places with one of his sisters. His dad gently put his large hand of security and love on his shoulder when he arrived next to him. I believe he communicated, "You're my son. I want you here by me."

All of this took place in just a few seconds and I bet most

people didn't even notice. Everyone in the family was calm. The boy wasn't shamed. Rather than the dad communicating, "You are bad," he communicated, "God is worthy to be praised."

That dad impressed me.

When this church service began, the pastor explained that children are welcome in the service. There's no other place for them to be. They discontinued their children's church program a while ago. The leadership want children to worship and learn alongside their parents.

To help him make the point that it is possible for children to handle a church service well and benefit from it, he asked us to raise our hand if that was our experience. Of course, many of us raised our hands.

As the pastor acknowledged that church might be challenging for some children, he held up a bright lime green "Pastor's Pal" bag that doubles as a backpack. Children who had one stood and waved and we clapped because they were in church. I wanted a bag!

The church is self-publishing quarterly books for their children to use during church. There are fun things to do, a place to write notes about the sermon and questions parents can ask children after church.

Everything in me wanted to applaud what this church was doing:

- The church leadership wondered if something they had been doing a long time was the best thing to do.
- They asked God for guidance.
- They decided, planned and bravely made the change, losing some families in the process. These parents didn't agree that "adult church" was in their children's best interest. They were unwilling to guide their children and risk being occasionally distracted. They were sad to lose some families, but I'm impressed that

these pastors knew this might happen and didn't get discouraged. They kept the big picture in mind.

- They created the Pastor's Pal program to help children be successful.
- They've checked with parents to see how it's going and have collected great testimonies.

During the pastor's "Pastor's Pal" announcement and then throughout the service, I thought about these fortunate children. Might they be less apt to leave the church and their faith later because they're experiencing more of church now? Might worshipping as a family help everyone in the family? Might parents' modeling help children see their parents as their authority?

I am still smiling as I think about this. I'd love to know what you think. {eoa}

**Dr. Kathy Koch** is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting With Our Kids in a Wireless World*.

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## **One Important Action You Don't Want to Forget in Prayer**

If you're prayer life is like mine was just a few years ago, you start with great intentions of praying for an hour, get through your prayer list, look at your clock and realize that it's only been 10 minutes.

The biggest frustration I faced in prayer was that I never really felt like I had actually connected with God.

And that's what prayer is, connecting with God on a deep level.

Partnering with Him in seeing His will accomplished here on Earth.

This is very different from prayer being a time when I recite to God all my needs from 1-10, one sided, one dimensional.

When I actually start partnering with God, when I make that connection with Him and when I discern what His will is in a certain situation and begin praying with authority according to His will, suddenly the one-dimensional relationship becomes multidimensional!

But what does it take to get there?

That's the question right?

What I believe most people miss in prayer is this:

## **Waiting on God**

There used to be an old Pentecostal term: Pray through.

You'd go to the altar and kneel to pray, and if you got up too soon the deacon's big hand would descend upon your head, push you back down to the carpet as he'd boom out, "Pray through, sister! Pray through!"

This could happen multiple times before suddenly something inside would break and you'd walk away that day completely and utterly changed from the inside out.

But in this just-add-water, microwave, instant-meal society which we live, we have forgotten what it means to wait on God.

You see, in prayer there is no just-add-water, microwave, instant-meal results.

Connection with God, partnering with God, and seeing His will

be done on Earth requires waiting. It requires praying through.

Yes, there will be sleepless nights.

Yes, there will be sore knees.

But in exchange you will enter into a partnership in which you know when you've said amen you've literally met with the King of all the Universe, the Lord of all Lords, I Am that I Am.

I can't tell you what this one thing has done for my prayer life.

In the past few years my prayer life has deepened, and continues to deepen each and every day, and learning to wait in prayer is just one thing that has transformed my understanding of prayer.

And I want to tell you more about what has transformed my prayer life!

I have put together a seven-day teaching called "7 Days to a Better Prayer Life."

While many of you remember that registration for this Bible study ended a week and a half ago, because it was so popular, I decided to open it up for anyone to purchase at any time.

While I may not be officially leading the study anymore, you are free to purchase the study and work through it at your own pace.

With this Bible study you receive lifetime access to seven videos, a 70-page prayer journal, and a private Facebook Group in which you can talk about prayer with other women and even ask me questions, because I am still present and active in the group.

You may check out the Bible study here: "7 Days to a Better

Prayer Life.” {eoa}

*Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. She can also be found at on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.*

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## **Slay Your Spiritual Giant With This Undefeatable Weapon**

In 1 Samuel 17:45-51, we read about David, the shepherd boy with his slingshot in hand, fearlessly rises to the occasion, accepts the challenge, ignores the obvious, and with full confidence in His God replies to Goliath's threat.

“You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have reviled. This day will the Lord deliver you into my hand. And I will strike you down and cut off your head. Then I will give the corpses of the Philistine camp this day to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And then all this assembly will know that it is not by sword and spear that the Lord saves. For the battle belongs to the Lord, and He will give you into our

hands" (1 Sam. 17:45-47).

After making his declaration of faith, he takes action, pulls back on the slingshot and releases his faith. The small stone flies through the air and hits his enemy right-smack-dab in the middle of the forehead. The mighty terror falls on his face to the ground, dead! David picks up Goliath's sword and chops his head off. As the Philistine army sees what happens to their prized champion they flee as fast as they can, and David, the shepherd boy, becomes the new world champion!

I know your enemy, Satan, is bearing down hard, and he is fully equipped with the latest up-to-date weapons called AIDS, ALS, cancer, and diabetes, and the death reports are frightening and overwhelming. But as a Christian, you have an even greater weapon in your sling, "Jesus, the Rock." You pull back, and let your faith loose, and that giant will tumble down! {eoa}

*Becky Dvorak is a prophetic healing evangelist, and the Destiny Image author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic, and the soon-to-be released, The Healing Creed. Click to learn more about Becky.*

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## **How You Can Help Reverse the Moral Collapse in America**

*"That you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore" (Eph. 6:13-14).*

It's breath-catching, heart-breaking and soul-searing to watch our nation implode morally and spiritually. The mental picture of the Twin Towers on 9/11 collapsing in a cloud of debris and

dust comes to my mind as I pray for America.

It is not buildings that are collapsing today. It is us—our nation.

What can God's people do?

We can humble ourselves, seek God's face and pray. Yes, we can!

We can fast. Yes, we can!

We can turn from our wicked ways. Yes, we can!

We can return to the Lord our God. Yes, we can!

We can plead for God's mercy to hear our prayer, forgive our sin and heal our land. Yes, we can!

And we should do all of the above!

But I believe it's also time for something else. It's time to take a stand against evil by applying our biblical values not only to our worldview, but to all we say, do or think, which includes the way we vote.

In the Old Testament book of Esther, God's people were threatened by an evil decree. Queen Esther fasted and prayed. But if she had done nothing else, she would have ensured the triumph of the wicked. Instead, she acted on what God laid on her heart. She stepped into the situation, encouraged by her uncle, who exhorted her, "And who knows if you may have attained royal position for such a time as this?" (Esth. 4:14)

As a result of the action Queen Esther took after her prayer and fasting, the evil was exposed, but it was not defeated. So her action alone was not enough. God's people themselves were called to get involved. Each and every one of them were called upon to resist the evil that was threatening. They answered the call, stood up to the enemy, and the tables were

turned (Esth. 9:1) God's people won the victory over the evil.

Like Queen Esther and God's people of her day, I believe it's time for you and me to take a stand against the evil that has come into our nation. Evil that defies God in rebellion against His Word and against His principles. Evil that is trying to destroy the very fabric and foundation of our nation.

This November we have the privilege of taking a stand the American way—at the ballot box. Make it your priority to know the candidates you are voting for, from the presidential race to the Senate races to the governorships to the judicial races to every other contest on the ballot. Go to the polls on Nov. 8 and vote your biblical values.

Nothing less than God's blessing, or judgment, is at stake in our nation. {eoa}

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