

**PRAY FOR THE U.S.A.  
2 Chronicles 7:14**

**At a church Vacation Bible School, they asked for volunteers to pray. One morning, a first grader enthusiastically waved his hand. Running to the front, he took a big breath as everyone bowed their heads and closed their eyes, quietly waiting before his voice boomed through the microphone: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America ..."**

**I think we can all appreciate the little boy's confusion. Our patriotism and love of our country gets all mixed up with our faith and love of God. I believe both love of God and love of our country are good and admirable things. But if we run into ethical, moral or spiritual conflicts – our allegiance is to our God first. So there can be a danger in saying, "U.S.A. right or wrong." That will be the downfall, the internal destruction of our country. If our nation is to be the kind of beacon light to the world we can be, we must humble ourselves under the corrective authority of almighty God. I absolutely love my country. I am proud of the freedom I have and that we offer here in the United States. People all over the world want to live here. Americans are the most generous people in the world.**

**But we are not perfect. We watch the news and we see the wickedness of the world lived out on our streets and in our own homes. Drug abuse is a problem in the U.S. because millions of people are abusing illegal and legal drugs – someone is doing it. Are we a part of the problem? Sexual immorality is a problem because we participate in it, excusing it as normal – from what we watch on the internet to our personal behavior. And we wonder why our country has these problems.**

**Lately we have been watching the oil spew out of the mouth of the well under the waters of the Gulf. It makes me angry and frustrated and helpless at the same time. I want someone to make it stop and fix it! Clean up this horrible pollution. It's being called the greatest ecological disaster in history. And for many it is the greatest economical disaster in history. We can also see it as a metaphor of the sin that comes pouring out of our country. I watch the news sometimes and have to turn the channel because it makes me angry and frustrated and helpless over the wickedness of the world that's spewing out of control in our own country. I fear for the future of our children and grandchildren. I want someone to make it stop and fix it – to clean up this horrible pollution that is ruining our great country.**

**Part of our nature is to blame others. We feel like if the government would just do a better job, we wouldn't have these problems. We know instead of criticizing, we should be praying for our leaders, like this T-shirt I saw. I thought, well that's great. We do need to pray for our President. Then I looked up Psalm 109:8 which says, "May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership." We always like to blame. It's so much easier. Pray for our leaders.**

**2 Chronicles 7:14 (which is easy to remember – 2 times 7 equals 14) is God's word to Solomon after the building of the great Temple. The Lord Himself consecrated the**

Temple as a place He is to be worshipped. Then He gives a conditional statement in this passage:

**14 if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

**If – then. If you do this, then this is what I will do.**

**IF...**

- 1. My people who are called by My Name – I remember when I was young about to go out somewhere, and my parents wanted me to behave, they would say, “Remember you are a Martin and your behavior reflects on our family. Remember who you are.” As a Christian I have a constant awareness that I am a Christ follower, a child of the Living God. The world watches how I act and what I say. I hear the Holy Spirit whisper to me, “Remember you are a Christian and your behavior reflects on our family – your heavenly Father, your Savior, Jesus.” We bear the Name of Christ. Will anyone see the family resemblance to Christ by the way you act, when you are not around Church or other Christians? Often in the morning when I put my seminary ring with the cross on it on my finger, I think or say the words, “Remember who you are.”**
- 2. Humble themselves – The Lord says we are to humble ourselves. We are usually not too good at that. We are usually too embarrassed by what others would think – “I don’t want to look weak” or we are just too full of pride - “I am not about to lower myself!” Or we make a joke about our unworthiness in the presence of some kind of greatness. “We’re not worthy!” So how do we humble ourselves before God?**

**Mainly it has to be mentally & spiritually. In the presence of the greatness, the wonder and the glory of God, we recognize our unworthiness and we bow before Who He is. What helps is our physical position. Did you ever wonder why we usually bow our heads in prayer? It serves a purpose in not being distracted by other people or things, but that’s not the only reason we bow. We humble ourselves; we are recognizing our own unworthiness; we are not worthy to look into the face of God. Sometimes we get on our knees; some even get on their face before God. Do not underestimate the power of the position of your body and how it reflects your attitude and your spirit before God. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,” the Bible says.**

- 3. Pray – Prayer is basically conversation with God. There is intercessory prayer, when we pray to God for others; there is supplication when we bring a concern before God and ask God to act on our prayer. “Please change the situation; change the person or persons involved; change me!” We intercede for our nation – we pray on it’s behalf. Our supplication to God is to heal our land from increasing crime, sexual immorality, every kind of abuse – from drug and alcohol abuse to mental, physical and sexual abuse of the innocent, from the abuse of power from a boss in an office to dictators of nations. Heal our land from the destruction from our own excesses – from oil to air pollutants, from everyday garbage to nuclear waste.**

God calls those of us who are called by His Name to pray. We have many protectors of our country who dedicate their lives (and even give their lives) to serve our country, the United States. As Christ followers, we are called to be the spiritual protectors of our country through our prayers to God. Pray for America.

4. **Seek My face – What does it mean to seek the face of God? It makes me think of someone requesting an audience with a great king. This is not an e-mail, a text, a tweet or Facebooking God. We are coming into His Presence where we are requesting that He lift up His face upon us, lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace. When the king would lift up his countenance upon the person seeking the request, it meant the king was looking upon them with favor and was likely to grant their request. When we pray, seek the face of God.**
5. **Turn from their wicked ways – The word *repent* comes from the Greek, *metanous*, or *change of mind*. It basically means a change of direction, a 180 degree turn around from going one way – toward sin and death, turning around toward the face of God which is life and peace and everlasting life. With all the wonderful qualities of the people of the U.S., we also have some very wicked ways. We need to turn from our wicked ways.**

In 1863 President Lincoln designated April 30th as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer. Here is a portion of his proclamation on that occasion: "It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, who owe their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by a history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord. The awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has grown, but we have forgotten God."

With just a few minor word changes, this could be the prayer for our nation today.

**THEN...**

1. **I will hear from heaven – So does this imply that God will NOT hear our prayers? Possibly. Isaiah 59:2 says:  
<sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated  
you from your God;  
your sins have hidden his face from you,  
so that he will not hear.  
So our sins can create a separating wall between us and God so that He does not hear our prayer. That is why it is important to repent before seeking the face of God. He removes the wall when we repent and He forgives. Then He will hear our voice.**

**He knows the voice of His child. He knows the voice of those who are called by His Name.**

- 2. And will forgive their sin – 1 John 1:9 says,, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**
- 3. And heal their land – The real healing of our land can only come from God. No politician, no legislation, no environmental agency, no police department local or federal, no president, no king – is able to heal our land to the depths of healing grace that only the Lord our God can bring. It starts with us when we humble ourselves and turn from our wicked ways - Then God will heal our land**

**If we expect a change in our country, we have to change; Our bodily position has an influence on how we pray; Our government – federal, state, local; Our armed forces Our police, firemen, emergency personnel; Pray for those effected by disaster – oil spill; hurricanes, floods; Pray for those who break the laws of the land; Pray for those who break the laws of God**