

DAY 1

Spiritual Awakening

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God's Word for Today

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

Thoughts for Today

When a nation sins – and all else has failed, there is a stop-gap remedy. God's people can cry out to Him. *"If my people, who are called by my Name, shall humble themselves..."* Humility describes the attitude, the disposition of the heart, the posture of deference and dependence. The Septuagint, interesting enough substitutes the idea of repentance. The Septuagint then captures the act; the Hebrew the attitude – both are necessary.

Second, they are to 'pray.' Here the word is 'palal,' a courtroom term. The idea is that of prayer as an intermediary. Having repented, and approaching God with humility, the penitent stands before God on behalf of the nation, between God and impending judgement – and prayerfully pleads for grace and divine intervention. There is more. Words are not enough.

Third, the focus of prayer is not to be merely on the hand of God, on blessings that need to be restored, but on the 'face' of God. It is a broken relationship that they now realize is in jeopardy if the sin and rebellion continue. The problem is a rarely ever sin – mere acts. It is something deeper, something is misplaced in the relationship. A first love is lost. Passion has cooled. The world and its allurements have become dominant.

It is the 'face' of God that is sought – the kind of fatherly kindness and grace seen by the prodigal in the eyes of his father. It is never law that brings the most compelling change, it is love. It constrains us. It motivates us. It is the impetus for lasting change. Finally, the people of God must also demonstrate righteousness – they must 'turn' from their wicked ways. This is more than sentiment. Repentance has to be modeled. The great need is not for the world to repent of their obvious sin, but for the church to repent of its sensationalized sin. In doing so, we show our respect for God's holiness, we evidence a reverence for God that is largely lost today.

God's people, gladly and openly called by his name, can by their response to his grace in prayer – set off a chain of events that see national sins forgiven, their land healed.

It's Time to Pray

1. Determine to demonstrate your humility before God. Not just for yourself, but for the sake of the nation.
2. Ask God to change you – to show you where a change in your attitudes and actions might reveal Christ to people around you.