

## Financial meltdown or spiritual crisis?

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

In the midst of everything going on during this election season in our nation, and the issues that challenge peace around the world, fear has rippled through many people in very deep ways these past weeks because of the financial meltdown that is creating shockwaves from Wall Street to Main Street. With jobs, mortgages and the retirement savings for many on the line, a different type of terror is striking the hearts of our friends and neighbors. From downtown New York to rural, suburban Ojai Valley, the sting of bad news compounded will, no doubt, start some people praying again. What is interesting is that we are actually hearing people at the top admit that they don't know what to do.

Although, in my opinion, there seems to be a broad naiveté regarding the depth of transformation that our country is in, most people realize that we are in the throws of change. The decisions that we are making right now are really about deciding who we areas a nation and defining our cultural values as a people. Like only a handful of pivotal times in our country's history, we are forging our future and crafting the culture that our children will be brought up in.

Do we as a people own to the consequences of our actions or point fingers at everyone else? Are we the kind that sidesteps accountability and dances through firestorms without getting burned? Will we continue to laud greed as good and mingle emerging ethics into godless indoctrination?

Although a slanted view of history is taught in schools today, most of us grew up hearing stories from our grandparents of a bygone era of straight talk, national pride, and individual sacrifices for the collective good. This was a time when freedom was fought for and free speech and freedom of religion was not considered a moniker of hate but a value worth dying for. Before tolerance trumped truth, and nobody knew anything about "political correctness," when serving one's country, hard work and homemaking were still honorable careers. I am speaking of a generation when we were not ashamed to say the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and we still believed in balance of power. Does anybody remember what it was like before activist judges took over? Some children may never know a period when laws were made by elected legislators not courts. This was a day when Americans transacted big business and bought groceries with the tender that proclaimed our national slogan "In God We Trust" and we meant it! Churches were full in those days, pastors were less confused, crime was lower, there were still vacancies in prisons, most people valued children more than Choice, and variant forms of sexual deviancy were not the hinge on which our nation turned.

The Bible makes it plain that there is a connection between the collective choices of a people, the culture that is created or accepted, and their economic and political success. However, there is a tendency to keep the

Scriptures in their place, collecting dust on the coffee table, and leave the economy and policy to those who handle that kind of thing. As a result, we are in trouble again and very few have any clue why. Some understand that calamity hits home when you lose your center. The same is true for a nation. We are facing difficult times and there is a cause, we have avoided principles for living what God has given us in his word. When we live dangerously, eventually we get hurt. However, sometimes it is easier to identify the fact that we're lost than to chart the safe way back. It begins with humility and honesty in a prayer that confesses failures and turns from old choices, then seeks wisdom that is higher than our own. God will intervene if we will choose to call upon him and ask. He loves people so much. Jesus loves you!

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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### **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:45am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

### **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View