

What Can The Righteous Do?

King David had great successes in his life, but he also had failures that rocked his world (1 Samuel 17; 2 Samuel 11-12). So when he wrote, "*If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?*", we know he personally pondered that question (Psalm 11:3). When his enemies rose up against him (and one of those was his own son Absalom) David was determined to put his trust in the Lord (11:1).

Why did David trust in the Lord when wicked, evil people tried to overpower and destroy him (11:1-3)? He trusted God because God rules from heaven (11:4), because God sees and examines mankind (11:4), because God hates the wicked and punishes their evil (11:5-6), because God is righteous and loves righteousness (11:7), and because God looks upon the upright with favor and affection (11:7).

We must trust the Lord for the same reasons when the foundations of our lives are threatened, shaken, and even destroyed. Consider this in light of recent events that impact our nation.

On June 26, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), saying the federal government can no longer define marriage as just between a man and a woman. In states where same-sex marriage is now legal, the participants will be afforded the same legal benefits from the federal government as heterosexual marriage couples have always been granted. This has the practical effect of U.S. taxpayers granting financial benefits to people in same-sex marriages. This ruling shifts the battleground over same-sex marriage to the states. When a state legalizes same-sex marriage, the federal government will recognize it and bless it.

The high court also ruled on California's Proposition 8, a voter-passed referendum that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. A district court had struck down the voter-passed referendum, reinstating same-sex marriage in that state. Citizens sued to defend the proposition, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled they had no standing to bring their suit. So effectively, this allows same-sex marriages to resume in California.

President Obama said DOMA "was discrimination enshrined in law. It treated loving, committed gay and lesbian couples as a separate and lesser class of people. The Supreme Court has righted that wrong, and our country is better off for it" ("Obama applauds court rulings on gay marriage", [FoxNews.com](http://www.foxnews.com)). Clearly, this administration honors LGBT conduct every way it can.

What are the righteous to do when evil is called good and good is called evil (Isaiah 5:20)? What is to be done by godly people when marriage is redefined into irrelevancy by moral equivalency and then enshrined in law? What shall Christians do when immorality is sanctioned by our laws and the righteous are made out to be bigots (or even criminals)? We can and must trust in the Lord like David did long ago (Psalm 11). Building upon the exhortations of Psalm 11, let us recognize and practice some of the scriptural answers to David's question, *"What can the righteous do?"*

First and always, the righteous must continue to keep their faith in God. God has not abdicated His rule over heaven and earth. When evil rises up the righteous look up and rely on God (Psalm 121:1). The Lord never sleeps; He will preserve, protect, and deliver the righteous from evil (Matthew 6:13). Nothing that men do *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:39).

The righteous must continue to pray. When the apostles of Christ faced threats from their people's religious leaders they earnestly prayed, not to escape personal pain and injury, but for the boldness to continue to speak God's word (Acts 4:23-31). Like them, we can pray for the courage of faith to be true to the Lord in the face of those who oppose righteousness and champion sin.

The righteous must be careful not to be consumed by anger. *"Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity"* (Psalm 37:1). The word *"fret"* means "to be hot, furious, burn, become angry, be kindled" (Brown-Driver-Briggs). We must not allow the sins of evil people turn us into raving fools! *"Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools"* (Ecclesiastes 7:9). The righteous are disgusted by the sins of the wicked as well as by those who condone and comfort sinners (Amos 5:15; Romans 12:9). But the righteous give place to the wrath of God; they are not drawn into sin by the sins of others (Romans 12:17-19).

The righteous must overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). A great testimony of faith occurs when we suffer unjustly and *"take it patiently"* (1 Peter 2:20). God's commendation is given to those who follow the example of Jesus when He suffered for us (1 Peter 2:21-22). We cannot allow disappointment to turn into disillusionment and then into despair.

The righteous must remember they are living for heaven. This world is not our home; our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). Remain virtuous in mind and conduct, *"having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation"* (1 Peter 2:12).

Christians give up their moral credibility when they think and act like the world while trying to defend what is right.

The righteous will exercise their rights and freedoms as citizens. It is right to do so (Acts 25:11). But while doing so, Christians remember to "*honor the king*" even while disagreeing with the ruling authorities (1 Peter 2:13-17).

The righteous will obey God rather than men. God's people submit to "*every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake*" (1 Peter 2:13). The exception is "*we ought to obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29).

Your faith will be tested by the promotion of sin by a faithless, godless society. Stand upon the ground of truth and stand up for Christ. "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love*" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

"The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:16-18).

Adapted From Joe R. Price