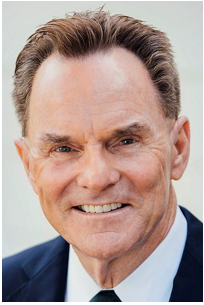


# Southern Baptists, think carefully about your ways

*By Ronnie Floyd  
Correspondent*



Floyd

Since the end of February 2020, I have carried a deep and increasing burden about the following things:

- The divisiveness and ongoing strife within our Southern Baptist family, resulting in turmoil and confusion.
- The ongoing attraction to lesser issues at the expense of our cooperative work to fulfill the Great Commission.
- The division and strife among evangelicals in the United States. Many Southern Baptists and evangelicals would rather live in the downstream of cultural disagreements and infighting between themselves than provide spiritual leadership to a nation that desperately needs it.
- The angry, cruel, ungodly, and carnal statements by Christians and even some Christian leaders via social media, articles, or comments in the media. These create suspicion and greater fear rather than faith and hope.
- The tragic state in America over racial matters and the growing and ongoing violent uprisings, which have fueled greater anger, hate-filled rhetoric, rebellion to authority, increasing lawlessness, and the loss of human life.

– The sadness and fear that has reigned since March, when the COVID-19 global pandemic began to shut down the entire country. As America is now re-entering life with our schools, universities, workplaces, churches, and social gatherings, we are still fighting about who is doing it right and who is doing it wrong – even now, we’re arguing about treatments and prevention measures. This leads to a greater distrust of one another. God help us all.

– Our nation remains in a political divide and distrust unlike anything we have ever witnessed in our lifetime.

As this evil is being unleashed violently in our nation in every way imaginable, it is undeniable that God’s people must take notice now as never before. That is why I believe God pressed within me a deep conviction that I must do something in this great hour of desperation.

Therefore, I did only what I knew I could do; I entered 40 days of praying and fasting for these matters that were such a heavy burden upon me. As I walked through these 40 days of praying and fasting, I was living on His Word and His promises, and experiencing His powerful presence through it all and yes, our God sustained me to see, and saw me through these days. I am grateful to my dear wife of 43 years, Jeana, as she prayed and fasted with me in the initial two weeks and then cared for me so I might seek the Lord wholly in the remaining days of this spiritual journey.

I wanted so much to hear what the Spirit was saying to me through God’s Word each day. Our gracious God gave some special words on Days 37 and 38 of the fast. These words were declared by our God four times in the book of Haggai. This statement is given only in Haggai 1:5 and 1:7, when the Lord of Armies says: *Think carefully about your ways.*

As God spoke these words to prepare His people for a great and new work among them in their days, I believe He is also

preparing us for a great and new work for the days ahead. These resounding words of God need to be heard by all of us: *Think carefully about your ways.*

I personally experienced a deep conviction by the Spirit that led me into a time of personal repentance. Therefore, I share these words with you today in humility and with brokenness:

Southern Baptists, think carefully about your ways. Evangelicals, think carefully about your ways. America, think carefully about your ways.

*Floyd is president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville.*