Even as they camped on the plains of Moab within sight of the Promised Land, the Israelites stumbled in their walk with God. Numbers 25 tells how the Moabites and Midianites enticed Israel into idolatry and sexual immorality (many commentators describe it as a pagan fertility cult). Is there any doubt that God was angry? He ordered the execution of the guilty and punished the Israelites with a terrible plague.

Incredibly, in the middle of all this sin and judgment, one of the tribal leaders of Israel had the gall to bring a Midianite woman right into Israel’s camp and take her into his tent. But when Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, saw this man’s defiance, “he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, and he went in after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked” (verses 7-8).

What stands out about Phinehas is not just that he saw the problem, or that he was disturbed by what was happening. The nature of this calamity was obvious, and many people were weeping over it (verse 6). But Phinehas wasn’t content to stand there and weep; he did something. And what he did made a great difference.

May God send us more men (and women) like Phinehas! No, I don’t mean people who are looking to run somebody through with a spear. I mean Christians who, when they see an opportunity, a problem, or a need, will take initiative and do something about it. People who, instead of just complaining about what is lacking, will do their part to make things better.

- Instead of complaining that “we don’t do enough to reach the lost,” a Phinehas will personally try to teach a friend or neighbor about the Lord.

- Instead of grumbling that “the church needs to be friendlier,” a Phinehas will offer a warm greeting to visitors at assemblies (and regulars, too!), will open his home and his spirit in hospitality, and will work to build and strengthen bonds of love.

- Instead of fretting that “someone ought to help,” a Phinehas will clean a house, mow a lawn, run an errand, cook a meal, or do something else for someone who is sick, disabled, elderly, or just in need.

- Instead of lamenting that “worship assemblies are not uplifting,” a Phinehas will pour his heart and soul into praising God and edifying others.

- Instead of grousing that “Christians are not dedicated enough,” a Phinehas will relentlessly pursue holiness in his own life and show others how it’s done.
Instead of worrying that “someone needs to say something” to a brother or sister who is out of line, discouraged, or struggling, a Phinehas will “admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, uphold the weak” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Of course, no one can do everything. But everyone can do something. Look around you. Do you see needs to be met? Tasks to be done? People to be helped? Souls to be nourished? Don’t just wring your hands in distress over it — keep the spirit of Phinehas alive and do what you can to make a difference!