



Freedom and Responsibility - Still Important?

Genesis 1:28: (NASB) *God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*

We are blessed. We live in a country where freedom of speech and assembly are a given - a country where we can choose who to worship and how we accomplish that worship. We live in a country where we can apply ourselves, work hard and attain levels of success that are not only rare, they are unheard of in many other places. We live in America and we have the freedoms that we currently enjoy because of the wisdom and sacrifice of the countless patriots who founded our country long ago. As we pause over the 4th of July weekend to celebrate their efforts and success, we also want to pause to look long and hard at our present interpretation of freedom. Have we lost our way when it comes to the privilege of living in freedom and assuming the necessary responsibilities that are inherent to it? Is our freedom here in America on borrowed time?



"God Bless America," (Verse one) Martina McBride

God bless America
Land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America
My home sweet home



Merriam Webster:

Freedom

- 1: the quality or state of being free: as in
 - a: the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action
 - b: liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another: independence

Leviticus 25:10: (KJV) *And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty <1865> throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.*

The Liberty Bell quotes part of this Scripture: *proclaim liberty throughout all the land.*





The Jewish Jubilee was the year at the end of seven seven-year cycles. See Leviticus 25:8-13. At this time, slaves and prisoners were freed, debts were forgiven and property returned to its original owner. This important time foreshadowed God's great kingdom in the future.

Liberty: Strongs #1865 derowr (der-ore'); freedom; hence, spontaneity of outflow (go where you would like), and so clear (no restriction)

New Testament words for *freedom*:

Freedom: Strongs #1658 eleutheros (el-yoo'-ther-os); unrestrained (to go at pleasure), i.e. (as a citizen) not a slave

Strongs #1659 eleutheroo; to exempt (from moral, ceremonial or mortal liability)

Strongs #1657 eleutheria; freedom (legitimate or licentious, chiefly moral or ceremonial)

The first word <1865> means a physical or civil sense of being free; not a slave; not being held under.

1 Corinthians 12:13: (KJV) *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or **free** <1658>; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

The second word <1659> means a very full sense of being made free - not merely "not a slave," but rather being liberated.

Romans 8:2: (KJV) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made **free** <1659> me **free** <1659> from the law of sin and death.*

The third word <1657> means the personal application of being liberated - the ability to make personal decisions.

Galatians 5:1: (KJV) *Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** <1657> wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

But we are supposed to be servants to righteousness and self-sacrifice. We are supposed to give up our own will. How has Christ made us free? More on this soon as we will learn how true freedom and responsibility work together.

To be free is to have choice. To be free is to have self-expression. To be free is to be able to apply yourself - to decide what you would like to do. This is a good beginning!

When and where in history was humankind most free?

To figure freedom out, let us go back in history to the time when mankind was most free:

Genesis 1:27-28: (NASB) *²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*

Adam and Eve had freedom from sin and death. They had direct communication with God Almighty. The Garden experience defines human freedom.



It is the blessing of God that is first mentioned in our freedom legacy - the open-ended goodness of the Creator as He bestows dominion to those created in His own image.



There are those who think God is a fictitious idea and they have no use for Him in their lives. They have decided we Christians live in a world of mythological beliefs. They are free to believe that. But the God of the Bible is in fact the Creator of the Universe and He does have a distinct and clear plan for mankind. He gave us what that plan would look like right at the beginning whether we choose to ignore it or not.



"This Land is Your Land," (Verse one) American Folk Music

This land is your land
This land is my land
From California to the New York island
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me
As I was walking that ribbon of highway
I saw above me that endless skyway
I saw below me that golden valley
This land was made for you and me

We can imagine Adam and Eve walking through the Garden immersed in the beauty, serenity and vibrancy of life that surrounded them. In America, we have a sense of freedom, but Adam and Eve lived in true freedom.

Genesis 1:29-31: (NASB) ²⁹Then God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food; and it was so. ³¹God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

It is the practicality of God that comes through next in our "freedom legacy." We first saw the blessing of God, and now we see His practicality.



God said, "I have provided for you and for everything else...now and in the future," and the result was *very good* in the eyes of God!

I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth - The Garden was only a small fraction of the whole earth. God already had a larger plan in mind.

Did all of creation really take only seven 24-hour days? No, we believe a "day" here means a period of time.

Adam was told he would die *in the day* he ate the fruit, but we know he lived about 930 years:

Genesis 3:5: (KJV) *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*



A day with the Lord is 1,000 years:

Psalms 90:4: (NIV) *A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.*

2 Peter 3:8: (NIV) *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*

From additional Scriptures, we know "Judgement Day" is actually a period of time - not one 24-hour day.

We use that same expression today. For example, "In my grandfather's day, there was no television." We would never think this means grandpa had television for his entire life except for one 24-hour day.



We are most free
when we
appreciate and
make use of the
providence of God

God can bless us, but we want to make sure we are using what He provides. What are we doing with all of the gifts He provides?



Merriam Webster:

- 1: the quality or state of being responsible, as in
 - a: moral, legal, or mental accountability
 - b: reliability, trustworthiness
- 2: something for which one is responsible: burden

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is perhaps a lesser part of the equation and in the minds of many, may even be considered undesirable.

Stats, Millennials, Entitled and Lazy, Early Show CBS News, June 2012

- (Announcer) *From CBS News, it's the Early Show.*
- (Reporter) *So much to talk about here. Joining us now is the man known as the "Gen Y Guy," Jason Dorsey. He is the author of, "Y Size Your Business." Good to have you with us again here, Jason. Good to talk to you.*
- (Jason) *Thanks for having me back.*
- (Reporter) *So, let's talk here. Millennials. They're not lazy, but they sure do seem demanding. I want to talk about a recent Cisco study and throw some numbers here on the board: 56% of current college students will not accept a job from a company that bans social media. 60% think they have the right to work remotely with a flexible schedule, and one in three students prioritize social media freedom and device flexibility over salary.*



Genesis 2:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die. ¹⁸Then the LORD God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.

It is the responsibilities that God requires that are now revealed in this story of our "freedom legacy." God's blessings, gifts and providences were given to set the context of human life on earth, and now humanity was called upon to maintain and protect that context. After all, mankind had dominion, and therefore the responsibility to keep and protect what God had given. *Cultivate and keep* was the maintenance portion of the dominion blessing, but there was more that came with dominion. Dominion also required respect for the boundaries of the free gift of our dominion.



Where and how can freedom go wrong?

Dominion is a high position and of necessity must be able to stand up under testing:

Genesis 3:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, indeed, has God said, you shall not eat from any tree of the garden? ²The woman said to the serpent, from the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, you shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.

The test: Do you know where the boundaries have been set for you? Satan asked this in such a way that would call the boundaries into question. He posed it as, "You have dominion; do you need silly boundaries? They are limiting you. You have control!"



There cannot be true freedom without rules. The default result of no rules is anarchy and discord.



Let us excerpt America's original pursuit of freedom with responsibility and put it against the backdrop of the scriptural principles of true freedom to better appreciate the true desires of those who signed the Declaration of Independence all those years ago.

The Declaration of Independence:

(Editor's note: original capitalization preserved)

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

Their decision to seek independence was because they believed humankind inherently had the right to be free, as endowed by God. This was a God-given right and went beyond a feeling of human entitlement. This Declaration began by honoring God.

Demanding, Millennials Entitled and Lazy, Early Show CBS News, June 2012

- (Reporter) *As someone who deals with these Generation Y people all the time, when you see these numbers, do you want to say, "Hey! Come on; let's get real!"*
- (Jason Dorsey) *I know their parents feel that way. This is what's interesting - when we interview them, they would rather be unemployed than take a job that they think is beneath them, and this is a shock. Twenty years ago if mom or dad said you go get a job, you got a job, and we're like, "I can't work today, it's Friday." It's just a totally different mindset and to use technology as a reason not to get a job is just another manifestation of this.*
- (Female reporter) *Or to turn down a job. So, what are businesses doing about this? Are they saying, "Well, forget about it. We don't need you anyways."*
- (Jason Dorsey) *It's mixed. It depends on the talent that they are looking for. If it's high tech, if it's engineering, there's a real workforce shortage right now that's overlooked in all these unemployment numbers. So, they are saying, "We'll give you the smart phone, we'll let you work from home, bring your mom! It's fine; it means you will be here on time!" And so they are going out and recruiting differently, they are incentivizing differently, they're making more level organizations, and they're giving these Millennials a chance to make a difference from day one, and that is what we really want more than title, more than money.*





Convenience is not true freedom.

Those who would usurp the bond between the Creator and the created will provide alternate thinking, enticing suggestions and accessible pathways, none of which provoke true freedom!

Genesis 3:4-7: (NASB) *⁴The serpent said to the woman, you surely will not die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.*

A graphic of a warning sign with a black border and a white background. At the top is a red oval with the word "DANGER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, the text is organized into three sections, each with a red, bold, sans-serif header followed by a line of black, italicized text. The first section is "ALTERNATE THINKING:" followed by "You will NOT die". The second section is "ENTICING SUGGESTIONS:" followed by "Your eyes will be opened". The third section is "ACCESSIBLE PATHWAY:" followed by "You will be like God". At the bottom of the sign, the text "RESULT: FREEDOM IS VIOLATED!" is written in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters.

DANGER

ALTERNATE THINKING:
You will NOT die

ENTICING SUGGESTIONS:
Your eyes will be opened

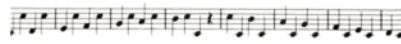
ACCESSIBLE PATHWAY:
You will be like God

RESULT: FREEDOM IS VIOLATED!



We are no longer free when we violate the responsibilities of our freedom legacy by acting on those things presented to us by those out of harmony with godly principles

Freedom includes choices. Part of this choice of freedom was for Eve to decide which voice she would listen to - the One who created freedom *because* of responsibility or the one who contradicted the idea of freedom with responsibility?



This Land is Your Land," (Verse two) American Folk Music

And the sun was shining, as I was strolling
In the wheat fields waving and dust clouds rolling
All around me a voice was sounding
This land was made for you and me
This land is your land
This land is my land
From California to the New York island;
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters
This land was made for you and me.

After listening to voices contrary to God's own voice, we feel exposed:

Genesis 3:9-12: (NASB) ⁹Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, where are you? ¹⁰He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself. ¹¹And He said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? ¹²The man said, the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.

By violating the responsibility of their freedom, they now felt shame and wanted to hide from the very One who held their lives in His hands.



We are no longer free
when we must live in shame
of our actions, try and
deflect the blame for our
choices and feel a need to
hide...
these are all symptoms of
denying responsibility

Adam and Eve denied freedom
for their posterity.



A caller from Connecticut suggests Christian Questions is on the air because we have freedom of speech in this country and we are grateful. Freedom is not free. Millions of marriages fail because people do not pay attention to the rules of responsibility and commitment. John 8:32: *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*



Marriage works on the same principles. There is great freedom within marriage because of responsibility to that marriage.

The founding fathers truly did see life as a responsibility to honor God and THEN to pursue freedom. By definition, that puts guidelines on your freedom.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Happiness is not a right; the pursuit of happiness is. How do you successfully pursue happiness? By being responsible to the guidelines of the freedom.



Get a job now, Millennials Entitled and Lazy, Early Show CBS News, June 2012

- (Female reporter) But not to be confused, these Gen Y-ers are not lazy people; they just have a different mentality, right? They are highly skilled.
- (Jason Dorsey) Well, some of them are lazy! I have a lot of friends who haven't woken up yet. Don't get me wrong - they are not looking for a job! But they do have a different work preference. Yesterday I spoke to all these CEOs and they said, "Jason, your generation is great. They don't show up on time but they stay late. At 2am they are sending emails, they're doing things on weekends." We just work differently, and that is the rub because people want us to work in the way in which they work and that doesn't fit this generation.
- (Male reporter) But do a lot of companies say, "Look, we're not willing to warm up to these trends," and does that hurt a lot of these kids trying to get jobs?
- (Jason Dorsey) It does. In fact, if I were to coach Gen Y Millennials it would be to lower your expectations, get a job now because we know if you stay unemployed after high school or college graduation for a year or two or three years, it's much harder to enter the work force.

Get a job now!



Entitlement is not responsibility.



Inevitably, we will again have to hear the voice of blessing, the voice of the Author of our freedom legacy pronounce the consequences of our accountability:

Genesis 3:17-19: (NASB) *¹⁷Then to Adam He said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat from it; Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken for you are dust and to dust you shall return.*

True freedom brings life and peace. Liberty without responsibility brings toil and hardship and will always eventually lead to death.



**The consequences of irresponsibility are dire!
Is there a silver lining to any of this?**

Fortunately, the giver of blessing and our freedom legacy is a God of compassion. God showed incredible benevolence even while allowing a harsh consequence.

In the midst of handing down the consequences for man's abuse of freedom, God saw fit to provide protection even as He banished them from their freedom:

Genesis 3:21-24: (NASB) *²¹The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ²²Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So He drove the man out; and at the east of*

the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Lovingly hidden within the compassion of God's protection was a veiled hope (the sacrifice of an animal picturing the future sacrifice of Jesus) in the garments of skins. God carried out justice but with a merciful heart. God's intention for His human creation created in His image was and still is for dominion, responsibility and yes, freedom. This freedom is a future hope and promise.



There are dire consequences when we betray the principles of whatever freedom we are given - betraying the responsibility freedom is built upon.

Declaration of Independence: (the first paragraph *after* listing the many grievances that the colonies had against Britain)

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

In some ways, the world of restless humanity rails against the tyrant (Satan) who is called *the god of this world*.



Parents not pushing, Millennials Entitled and Lazy, Early Show CBS News, June 2012

- (Jason Dorsey) *You've got to take the jobs you can get now and get the experience, build your network, do these things to give you more options rather than say, well, I've got to hold out. I'm 28 and I've got to be a manager first. Never worked anywhere, but I've got to be in management.*
- (Female reporter) *And you have to take into account that at some point, mom and dad are going to kick you out of the house so you need to get a job.*
- (Jason Dorsey) *You would think that, but it's not happening. That's what's so amazing. When we interview parents and ask them, "When are you going to*



get your kids to leave?" I just did this on my Facebook page. The average response was age 30.

- (Female reporter) Maybe that is part of the problem! Get them out of the house!*
- (Male reporter) If my parents could have gotten me out of the house at 16, I would have been out of the house. I remember that line in college, "Christian, don't even think about coming home."*

We just talked about the great parenting of Adam and Eve by God and here is the contrast. Parents have grown weak and cowardly in relation to their children and won't demand anything of them in terms of responsibility. This type of corrupt parenting in turn causes children to think they deserve things they do not have to earn. What one generation tolerates, the next generation accepts. With the following generation, it becomes the law of the land.

Rick's personal story about how generations have changed:

My grandmother passed away several years ago at 98 years old. Her work ethic was unequalled. She lived through the Great Depression when there was no entitlement programs or bailouts for the average person. When they did not have work, money or food, she and my great grandmother together went door to door selling sewing needles because there was nothing else they could do.



Five Generations of Rick's Family:
(Starting from left)
Rick, his wife Trish,
his grandmother Helen (standing),
his mother Anna May,
his great grandmother Anna (bottom right)
and Baby Tim

They did not sit and complain. They went out and found a way to make a few pennies. After she passed away when we were going through my grandmother's things, we found some of those sewing needle kits they sold. (See picture on next page.) That is my legacy. That is the example I am supposed to live up to in terms of being responsible. You get freedom because of responsibility not just freedom with responsibility. That is what God taught us in the Garden of Eden experience.





The world is in search of their rights, and yet this search is influenced by Satan who was the original coveter, the original seeker of things NOT rightly his. This is where freedom breaks down, as it is not being responsible to the guidelines with which it was given.

Satan, the original coveter, is prophetically spoken of here:

Isaiah 14:12-14: (NKJV) ¹²How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning... ¹³For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.

We see this same spirit in the world today with its “me me me” culture with the attitude of, “What I feel dictates how I act, and how I act dictates how you must respond.” That is satanic. True freedom cannot be obtained by going down that path of anarchy and destruction.

In contrast, Jesus came to this world to restore the freedom that had been lost. Here is our silver lining to all of the mess:

Luke 4:16-20: (NASB) ¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, ¹⁹TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. ²⁰And he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Jesus explained that he came to bring freedom - the freedom that had been lost in the Garden of Eden. Jesus came to set free the oppressed - all of us. He was coming to do the will of God, whereas Satan tried to take the place of the will of God.



How do we stay true to and responsible for the freedoms and opportunities that we have been given?

The founders expressed a deep and abiding principle that when applied can keep us focused on the magnitude of our responsibility to the gift of freedom. Freedom because of responsibility in action:

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude (moral integrity) of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The Declaration of Independence begins and ends with God. Freedom with responsibility is put in the context of godliness, where it truly belongs. Do we even know what "sacred honor" is these days?

Here is a tribute to those heroes who have fought and died so we can have the freedoms that we have:



"America the Beautiful," (Verse one) Ray Charles

Oh beautiful, for heroes proved,
In liberating strife,
Who more than self, our country loved,
And mercy more than life,
America, America, may God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divined.

With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence - God DOES protect us!

Psalm 91:1-2: (NASB) ¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say to the LORD, My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!

Because we fundamentally trust in God, we therefore are responsible to believe his word:

Psalm 119:104-106: (NASB) ¹⁰⁴From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. ¹⁰⁶I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

Therefore I hate every false way - Our society instead seems to *tolerate* every false way. Where we have a scope of influence, we need to apply godly righteousness, especially with our children and a sense of entitlement.

Belief in His word makes us responsible to stand up for it against the usurper Satan:

Ephesians 6:10-12: (NIV) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our



struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Mutually Pledging Our Lives, Fortunes and Sacred Honor -

Freedom for excellence - ours is an opportunity to fully offer up all that we are and have:

Romans 6:18-19: (NIV) ¹⁸*You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.* ¹⁹*I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.*

We must hold to the guidelines of freedom.

Pledging your sacred honor is not just a statement; it is a day-by-day way of life!

2 Peter 1:5-8: (NASB) ⁵*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*



"God Bless America," (Verse two) Martina McBride

God bless America
Land that I love
Stand beside her, and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains, to the prairies
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America
My home sweet home
God bless America
Our home sweet home

That song is a prayer, asking for God's blessing. What are we doing so that God can bless us? Are we living in accordance with true, scriptural principles of freedom? Are we living in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Genesis? The Garden of Eden experience was the model of true human freedom. Defiance to the principles of righteousness and responsibility have left us without such freedom.

Freedom is a byproduct of God's blessing, providential overruling, plan, guidance and direction. On the other side, freedom is the byproduct of our *responsibility* to God's blessing, providential overruling, plan, guidance and direction. It is our responsibility to live up to His guidelines.

We have to look at that personally - how do I live up to the freedom opportunities that God has given *me*? Let this Fourth of July weekend help you to thank those who have put their lives on the line for us and also help us to focus on spiritually what we can do to be free in Christ.



*So, freedom and responsibility - still important?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of
CQ Rewind!*





First, a few words about the idea of a Church-State setup - this was NOT in the American plan. While the founders were God-fearing men, they did not have any desire to set up a nation under a single religion or a nation where religious freedom would be hindered. They took many Judeo-Christian principles and created a man-made government "of the people, by the people and for the people" (Gettysburg Address) to give all citizens the right to pursue happiness.

Putting the Constitution in perspective with the Declaration of Independence:
(Source: wiki.answers.com)

The U.S. Constitution was written in 1787 after the Second Continental Congress called for a convention in Philadelphia to modify the Articles of Confederation, the document that served as the foundation for the United States' first national government. On May 25, 1787, fifty-five delegates from twelve of the thirteen states (Rhode Island boycotted the convention) converged on Philadelphia intent on solving problems that arose from weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation. The written authorization was "to devise such further provisions as shall appear to [the delegates] necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." Some of the issues they needed to address was the lack of Executive and Judicial Branches (no federal court system), a means of providing fair representation for states of unequal population, a way of mediating disputes between the states, provision for taxing power or other means of raising revenue, and related issues.

(Solving this issue was easy - see below for quote from James Madison.)

"For my own part, I sincerely esteem it [the Constitution] a system which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests." [1787 after the Constitutional Convention]
- **Alexander Hamilton**

So, America's constitutional government was a government of men, for men and therefore God must of necessity be left OUT of the Constitution. However, it was the principles of God, the Bible and Christianity that were the driving forces behind it - everyone knew that back then!!!

American freedom was fought for with humble observance of a higher way:

(www.eadshome.com) At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches. He discovered this model of government from the Perfect Governor, as he read Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us." - **James Madison**

Here are the basics that drive the sacred honor of a Christian:

Micah 6:6-8: (NASB) ⁶With what shall I come to the LORD and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? ⁷Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?



THE U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

The Declaration of Independence: A Transcription

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.



He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring



on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.