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6-26-11

Salvation!
Our
Dependence
Day?



Reflections

July 4th celebrations are just around the bend, as they say. Fireworks stands are being erected and stocked with all the latest smoke and noise making fireworks and picnics and camping are on many family agendas. Choosing where to see the best professional fireworks show is next on many to-do lists to celebrate Independence Day. A special day indeed for our nation.

Recently graduated students are adjusting to the reality that their independence may not be as wonderful as they previously believed. They are asking themselves, their parents, and others about what their options might be as they prepare for what lies ahead. How will I make a living? College? Military? Trades? Tech School? Lots of options lie ahead and each path may have rewards, challenges, or perils that are not yet part of our understanding. Independence, it seems, is not necessarily a real possibility for everyone. Taxes, rules, bosses, over-reaching governmental controls, and other restrictions on our choices, all color the notion of independence as citizens.

When we look for true liberty and freedom we must also look to our spiritual lives. Jesus offers, not independence, but rather a life that depends on His care, love and grace. The Word of God instructs us to trust in Him rather than our own wisdom as He guides our life's path. Let's examine His instructions. *⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJ) and ⁹ A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9 NKJ) and then ³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33 NKJ)* The Word makes clear that being independent is not what God desires for His children. He wants them to depend on Him for all their needs, physical, material, and spiritual.

While being independent from another nation, as in the political realm where the USA became independent of the British Empire is desirable, being independent of God is not. It took great sacrifice to secure the liberties that we seem to value less and less as the years

unfold. Men and women pledged their sacred honor and all their resources to secure an independence that would allow individuals the opportunities for success or failure based on their own motivations and choices. The context for such a nation is clearly described by two important words eventually added to our national pledge: *Under God*. The founders of our nation believed that God must be acknowledged, and depended upon in such a nation and God has blessed us, as a result, with great blessing over the years. In spite of our human frailties, our mistakes, and even our successes, God has given us an extraordinary blessing of His grace.

Sadly we have, it seems, lost our way as we have forgotten God and ignored His Word in our daily lives and in our politics as a nation. That which God has judged in His Word as evil, has now become part of our national policies. We have embraced the clearly unembraceable in many of our political decisions and are now receiving the penalty of those choices in our national condition. It seems that this nation of free people is gaining speed as it drifts into decline.

As our nation is travelling the wrong path, so we as a people seem to also be travelling in the same pathway to destruction. We have become a nation of self-interested people who believe that motivation is to be replaced with entitlements regardless of effort to be productive and useful. The Word of God tells us that we are to be responsible for our families needs. *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8 NKJ)* That doesn't sound like we are to let the government provide for us and merely drift along with the tide. When we subject ourselves to government provision we become enslaved to not only the provisions but to its whims and policies that, too often, are in conflict with God's plan for our lives. *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Romans 6:16 NKJ)*

Let's enjoy the celebrations of our national independence but let's not forget to live in dependence on God's provision for our lives. He desires that His people cast their cares and needs on Him. We need to learn to be confident in His care for us, after all He provided for our eternal salvation in Christ. Better to be dependent on Jesus than to walk with an independent spirit and miss His grace. **Pastor Doug**