



"The preservation of liberty depends upon the intellectual and moral character of the people."

—John Adams

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Called to Liberty

The 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant surmised, "Freedom is the birthright of man; it belongs to him by right of his humanity, in so far as this consists with every other person's freedom."

It is ironic that while many people in the United States feel a sense of increased "freedom" in areas of personal immorality and unethical behaviors, their civil freedoms have been steadily eroding all around them. Laws are passed every day by lawmakers that restrict our freedom of movement and activity we have so long enjoyed and taken for granted. Many of these laws trample our constitutional rights as citizens of the United States. Unrealized is the fact that this loss of physical freedom is a reflection of the willful disregard for the laws of [God](#).

In his early-20th-century book, *The Civilized Mind*, Lynn Harold Hough wrote this insightful statement,

The escape from the Ten Commandments through violating them has never kept its promise of giving a new freedom. The experience is like the attempt to escape from the law of gravitation by defying

it. The result is likely to be at least a bad fall. The philosophy of license is really a network of clever lies. The apostles of license are all the while promising that which they cannot give. You cannot become free physically by defying the laws of nature. And you cannot become free morally by defying the laws of ethics.

Now, it seems the ugly head of tyranny is about to take another bite. If the Bush administration's threatened follow-up legislation (called "Patriot Two") to the Patriot Act becomes law we would see an immediate reduction of freedoms, some of which will no doubt affect the Christian community. Under the draft's provisions, the government could keep arrests secret until criminal charges are brought, no matter how long that takes, and strip Americans of their citizenship if they even unwittingly help a group the Justice Department determines to be "terrorist-related," to name just a few of the freedom-devouring provisions.

If enacted, this draft legislation would go far toward eliminating many limitations on government powers—powers the Founding Fathers were terrified to allow the government to possess. It is especially disconcerting that "Patriot Two" seems to target American citizens more than the original Patriot Act does. Although a groundswell of resistance to such legislation may succeed in removing its more harmful elements, the track record of legislators over decades has established the trend of tightening the screws of restriction on the freedoms of U.S. citizens.

Government secrecy in implementing Patriot Two sends up a red flag of alarm. What are they up to? Self-serving, God-rejecting leaders throughout human history have always sought to steal God-given liberties from other human beings to serve their own lust for power.

At this time, resistance by a coalition of the ACLU, immigrant groups, religious organizations, Internet privacy groups, and others is enough to give passage of the draft legislation a rocky road in its present form. However, since the Patriot Act was passed quickly after 9-11, Patriot Two may need another "crisis" to scare the American public into willingly sacrificing more precious freedom in the name of national and personal security.

According to James Dempsey, executive director of the Center for Democracy and Technology, "The bill is irrelevant until the next attack. Nothing will happen until then. . . . This is a major threat to civil liberties. But I don't think they'll introduce it until they think they can get it. They are holding it back until the next attack."

Is it wise to give the government heavier chains to restrict freedom? At what point do these "benevolent" chains become the chains of slavery to an unholy tyrant? The answer is the point at which a nation and its leadership reject the instruction of a righteous, benevolent God. Only God can guarantee liberty. It is not enough to say we are [Christians](#); we have to live as [Christ](#) lived.

True Christians can take comfort in this: The laws of God and the freedom they guarantee stand solidly and immutably in place for those whose thoughts and actions are based on [love](#). Not even the conspiring governments of [this world](#) can destroy that.

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! ([Galatians 5:13-15](#))

Our true freedom is not in the protections and guarantees of any earthly government but in the liberty assured by God Himself to those who live their lives in benevolent service to one another.

- Martin G. Collins

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Liberty vs. Independence](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Although we, through Christ's sacrifice, have been freed from the curse or death penalty of the law, we have not, as most Protestants believe, been freed from law keeping. We have been liberated from the degeneration of sin, the fear of death, corruption, and the elements of this world. If we live righteously, through the power of God's Spirit (the mind of Christ), we remain free from sin. We are delivered from the bad bondage of sin (leading to death) to a good bondage of righteousness (leading to life), becoming indentured servants until our death, at which time we become transformed into God's spiritual offspring. As slaves of righteousness, we are dependent upon our master. As followers of Christ, we are not independent but interdependent and interconnected as Christ's body. Freedom comes from surrendering to God's will.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Was God's Law Nailed to the Cross?](#)

by Earl L. Henn

Many point to Colossians 2:14 to "prove" that it is no longer necessary to keep God's law, but is this really what the apostle Paul means? Was the law nailed to Christ's cross? What is the "handwriting of requirements" he writes of? Using the immediate context and supporting scriptures, Earl Henn untangles the apostle's intent in this verse.

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