



"The disciplined man is the freest of all."
—Dean Smith

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Our Declaration of Independence (Part Two)

In Part One, we learned about America's early struggle for independence and how the founders of the United States pledged their wealth, lives, and honor to bring it to pass. We also saw that those whom [God](#) calls out of [this world](#) have a freedom that no others can have: freedom from the sway of [Satan](#) the Devil, allowing us to make our own moral choices outside of his influence. Our independence from Satan's control is a tremendous gift from God.

However, remaining independent of this world and its ruler is hard work. Jesus instructs us in [Matthew 7:13-14](#): "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to eternal life, and there are few who find it." To be independent means to control and direct our actions to blaze our own trails, following our Forerunner on His path, and to reject the broad and easy path that this world has so generously paved for us to take.

We can gain an understanding of independence by recalling the process that occurs as we grow up, mature, move out of our parents' home, and establish our own households. We feed and clothe ourselves, making plans and directing our actions. We pay our bills and become both responsible for and

beneficiaries of the choices we make. While our new independence means that we are self-directed and can make our own decisions, we are still members of a civilized society and must conduct ourselves accordingly. Freedom without such self-imposed restraint is anarchy.

Author Chris Brogan writes in a blog post, "[Independence Isn't Freedom](#)":

Independence isn't freedom, or at least it's not freedom from everything. Independence is the acceptance of a lot of responsibilities. . . .

Independence is a difficult path. . . . [I]t is not a destination, but rather the hallway that connects dependence and interdependence. . . .

You're not free from worry, not free from responsibility, not free from challenges or hardships or the possibility of failure. You're not free from much. You've simply signed (literally or figuratively) onto the notion that you'd like to steer the ship's ultimate direction, for better or worse.

To those who've chosen independence in some (or all) facets of their lives, I salute you, because it's a difficult choice. But the rewards are often worth it.

James Daly, the president of Focus on the Family, writes similarly in a Daly Focus article "[The Cost of Independence](#)," "When it comes to America's sovereignty, freedom has never been free." He tells us that since the founding of this nation, 1.3 million Americans have died in combat. We need to remember the costs that our fathers, mothers, and brothers and sisters have paid, giving their lives to secure and preserve our freedoms and to keep America independent. These deaths, he says, represent an untold number of tears.

Jesus says that there is no greater [love](#) than to lay down one's life for his friend ([John 15:13](#)). From his American point of view, Daly adds, "Nothing can compare with sacrificing one's life in the service of one's country. . . . [F]reedom and independence come at a steep price." He writes insightfully,

"Freedom is not only not free, but it's often more difficult to manage than tyranny."

He goes on to mention the late radio commentator Paul Harvey, who said, "Self-government won't work without [self-discipline](#)." With that in mind, he asks us to consider how can we address the shortcomings of others without setting the right example ourselves. This advice sounds a great deal like Jesus' admonition about judging in His [Sermon on the Mount](#): "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider that plank in your own eye?" ([Matthew 7:3](#)).

Daly offers some practical advice. First, he says, we can serve God by being "the very best citizens of our great country." Next, we need to place a priority on controlling our tempers and emotions. Finally, he reminds us that "ultimately, true freedom, independence, and liberty are found only in [Jesus Christ](#)." It is perfectly fine to celebrate America's independence from British rule, but it is far better to be thankful for our independence from the ruler of this world and to celebrate our *dependence* on our great Creator God!

We can never let it slip far from our minds that we have been selected by God to declare our independence from this world and its tyrannical ruler. We have been set free from captivity to the Devil's world to choose to follow God's way of life willingly. Our grievances against this world's tyrannies simply cannot be remedied at this time. One can say that we are the new patriots, citizens of the [Kingdom of God](#) working with God and Christ, doing our part to prepare spiritually for the establishment of a new, *God-centered* society. Let us pursue our great undertaking "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence," and "pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and sacred Honor."

American patriot Thomas Paine wrote, "The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap[ly] we esteem too lightly. It is dearness that gives everything its value." Our allegiance to God's way of life will cost us our lives ([Romans 12:1](#)), but we can in the meantime rejoice in our precious independence from Satan and his world, remembering the enormous price that was paid to secure that freedom for us.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

From the Archives: Featured Article

[A Matter of Honor](#)

by Staff

The Bible has a great deal to say about honor and whom we should honor. This article gives us a hard but necessary lesson in honor.

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