

# ...With Liberty and Justice for All.

Understanding American Liberty.  
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As Americans, we are assured in our founding documents -  
*the Declaration of Independence,*  
and *the*  
*Constitution of the United States* -  
that our government is bound by law to protect and defend the  
inalienable rights bestowed upon the individual  
by our Creator.

## What Is Liberty?

*Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness* are guaranteed to *all* Americans. However, I believe that most of us would be hard pressed to give a concise statement as to exactly what is meant by '*liberty*'. I've heard many say something like, "Liberty is being free to do whatever we want." Of course, that general, and vague, statement is obviously deficient. I am *not* free to kill someone, no matter how much I may want to. If we only have vague concepts of what liberty is, how shall we appreciate our liberties, and demand that our elected officials protect and defend them.

In an effort to combat the excesses of a society that, *in the name of liberty*, has "fallen away from God", some Christians, engage in fighting "culture wars" by seeking to use the arm of political pressure to pass or enforce laws to restore righteousness to the land.

## Faith & Liberty.

Christians, like *all* Americans, have a Constitutional right to be involved in the political process. But the very gospel which evangelical Christians profess insists that law is absolutely powerless to make a people righteous. The letter (law) can only expose and condemn; it can never transform. Only the gospel of Christ can change the heart. Yet, many Christians think that the *primary* objective is to establish and enforce righteous moral laws. There is a disconnect, it would seem, between a stated faith in the Gospel of Grace, and the methodology deemed necessary to confront the "*real*" problems of the world.

Our "founding fathers", for the most part, understood the difficulty. While insisting that the new nation could not survive unless the *people* - individuals - maintained a vibrant faith and conducted themselves accordingly, they ultimately resisted the temptation to accomplish that purpose through *law*. Our early presidents repeatedly called upon the American people to remember their Creator, to actively engage in religion, and to pray for God's mercy. In times of national crisis they called, not just for days of prayer, but for days of *repentance*. This they considered their *duty* as national leaders of a free people. But they did not attempt to *pass legislation* to accomplish these ends. Whenever such legislation was proposed, it was soundly defeated.

## An Unexpected Turn.

The centrality of Christ and the Bible in our national founding is undeniable *if* we read the actual writings of the founders, and their mentors, and not the revisionist histories that have permeated the last hundred years. **But it was precisely their biblio-centric understanding that, in the end, prevented them from adopting, for example, the Ten Commandments, or any other moral list, as the "law of the land."**

Instead, they framed the responsibility of government around, not an enumeration of moral commands, but upon the identifying and protecting of *the 'God-given' rights of the individual*. They then constitutionally *limited* the scope of government to *that purpose*; and, by carefully constructed *checks and balances*, they strictly limited the power of any one *branch* of government.

This precipitated the unparalleled genius of the *American Experiment*. Though law could not legislate moral-

ity, it *could* recognize and protect individual liberties, and seek to prevent the tyranny of rulers. And thus, we were given a **Constitutional Republic** – not a democracy. In a democracy, half-plus-one can trample the rights of the individual *and* of the minority. A representative Republic, resting upon the *Constitution* as the *law of the land*, was to assure the God-given right of ‘*liberty and justice for all.*’

### **Moses Speaks!**

The defining of these individual rights and liberties was based upon the Judeo-Christian scriptures, the Bible, and predominately, and ironically, on the **Ten Commandments**. In this ‘old covenant’ established by God, through Moses, with the children of Israel, were inherently embedded presumed *God-given liberties*, which are further enumerated in the rest of scripture. The first four commandments inherently presumed the *freedom of (not from) religion, free speech, and the right to peaceably assemble*. Clearly embedded in the other six commandments were the *individual’s right to life* (6<sup>th</sup>), the *sanctity of marriage* and the *primacy of the family unit* (5<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>), the *individual’s right to fair and truthful application of justice* (9<sup>th</sup>), and the *right to private ownership and protection of property* (8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>). (See chart on last page.)

For government, the only ‘morality’ for which it is responsible, is the maintaining of individual liberties, and *justly* dealing with those “evil-doers” who violate another’s constitutional rights, briefly comprehended in *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness* (self-determined well-being).

### **American Liberty Defined.**

**These individual rights, along with the limiting of the form and scope of government, are the definition of American Liberty.** If I kill someone, the government’s only “moral” concern is that I have violated another’s inalienable “right to life”, and I must be *justly* punished under the law.

### **The Confusion of Roles.**

Now, this brings us to an extremely important truth. When Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” he clearly teaches us the fact that **there are two distinct lines of authority under which every individual must live** – that which is defined by earthly government (under God), and that which is defined by the individual’s direct responsibility and accountability to God. **When we confuse the responsibilities of government with that of the individual, we bring upon ourselves the progressive loss of our liberties.** Too many Christians (and self-serving politicians) try to take the commands of Christ to the individual and apply them to the government. The government does not exist to feed the poor, to be kind to it’s enemies, to turn the other cheek, to forgive all criminal trespasses, to raise and educate our children, to manage our money, to rule over our property, to define our families, to provide us jobs, to make our health and safety choices *for* us, to arbitrarily bestow the blood-bought rights and privileges of its citizens upon non-citizens, etc., etc., etc. It *must* protect and defend the rights of the individual citizens under its jurisdiction, from whom it derives its power and existence; and to that end, it must maintain a sufficient military force to protect and defend American Liberty – period! **The moment we begin to transfer individual responsibilities and liberties to the government, we incrementally begin enslaving ourselves to government, and to its own elitist defining of the rights and responsibilities of (and to!) the collective whole.**

### **Individual Accountability.**

It is to the *individual* that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are given; and for the use of these liberties he is individually accountable to God, **but, all according to the liberty of his own conscience.** While righteous leaders will *promote and encourage* the acknowledgment of, and accountability to God, Government has no authority either to force or deter the individual in his faith by intimidation, or by legislation. **Thus, the blessings of liberty would be preserved for all faiths, and for both believer and non-believer alike.**

Every government official and servant takes an oath to protect and defend the *Constitution of the United States*, and thereby individual liberties - an oath which is made a mockery of by most politicians, today.

It is imperative that we recover the understanding of our nation’s founding, and the purposes intended; and that we demand that our politicians and leaders, *of any party*, be bound by those purposes. We must begin the long journey back home, so that “**government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth**”. Abraham Lincoln... *The Gettysburg address.*

***Proclaim Liberty throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof.***  
***Leviticus 25:10***

# Liberty & Justice for All

## CHART OF PERSONAL LIBERTIES

### *Ten Commandments*

- Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (1)
- Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. (2)
- Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain. (3)
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (4)
- Honor thy father and thy mother.(5)
- Thou shalt not commit adultery. (7)
- Thou shalt not kill. (6)
- Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor (9)
- Thou shalt not steal. (8)
- Thou shalt not covet anything that *is* thy neighbor's. (10)

### *Inherent Liberties*

**Freedom of Religion, Speech, and Assembly.**

**Sanctity of Marriage & the Primacy of the Family Unit**

**Right to Life**

**Right to Truth in Justice under Law**

**Right to pursue, hold & defend Private Property**