

Freedom, Independence, Liberty

by Wayne Goff

Today is July 4; Independence Day for the United States of America. Freedom, independence, and liberty are catch words that conjure up many patriotic thoughts and ideas. In America, it means the freedom to be what we choose to be; the freedom to come and go as we please; the freedom to be educated as much as we wish; and the freedom to be ourselves. Rarely in history have men had this much freedom.

Independence is usually associated with countries or nations; while freedom and liberty more often apply to people. Freedom implies an absence of restraint; liberty implies the power to choose among alternatives rather than merely being unrestrained.

License may imply the liberty to disobey rules or regulations imposed on others, especially when there is an advantage to be gained. But most often license refers to an abuse of liberty or the power to do whatever one pleases. God and Christians are opposed to license. God is a God of order, design, and regulation. Things work better when people do that for which they have been designed -- which is true freedom.

Biblically-speaking freedom most often is used of freedom from sin. When Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32), He meant free from the prison of sin. When Jesus said "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), He meant rest from the burden of sin. When Jesus said, "...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10), He meant a great spiritual life without the hindrance of sin.

The point that we should get from these few passages is that man will never be free so long as he is in bondage to sin! Jesus pointed this out plainly when He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (Jn. 8:32). If you think otherwise, then just consider how much time, money, energy, and grief are dedicated to people's pet sins! Billions of dollars are spent each year by our government in an effort to clean up the destructiveness of sin. Doctors and hospitals are full of people who refuse to quit sinning, whether it is sexually, gluttony, or intoxication. Jesus said you are enslaved by sin, and for those who want out of that enslavement, the Good News of the Gospel is there. Yes, I am glad America has an Independence Day! But I am so much happier that God has given us, every day, Independence Life!

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