

Independence Day | Preparing, Celebrating, Discipling

I. Celebrate God for Your Independence.

- Regardless of where you live, all born again believers have been set free from sin and death. And that is definitely worth celebrating.
 - Romans 6 has a long discourse on the fact that believers are no longer slaves to sin.
 - In John 8:32 Jesus eloquently teaches us that truth sets us free from the lies of self and Satan.
 - And the eternal life promised in John 3:16 is a promise that we are free from the threat of eternal death in hell and separation from God.
- It doesn't matter if you live in a country where all of your liberties have been stolen, they cannot take your freedom from sin and death. But if you happen to live in a nation that provides you freedom to live your life unfettered by a godless government, that too is something to celebrate.
- You are always free to obey God. Even if the world kills you for it, they can't keep you from obeying God.
- Regardless of where you live, you should celebrate God for giving you freedom in Him.

II. Celebrate God for Your Dependence.

- **We are dependent on our fellow disciples.**
 - Do a word search on the "one another" passages. You'll easily discover all the things you and your fellow disciples should be doing with each other, but you'll also learn how very badly you need other Christians ministering in your life.
 - There's also a plethora to be said in the Scriptures about Christian unity. The High Priestly prayer deals with this, but the concept is also discussed in so many of Paul's epistles. One example is I Corinthians 12:12.
 - You really need to be dependent on the Christians in your local Body of Christ if you're going to function in a way that glorifies God.
- **We are dependent on the Scriptures.**
 - We are dependent on the Scriptures in order to know God. (John 1:1-4; Romans 10:13-17)
 - You cannot have a relationship with God or know the mind of God apart from His Word. Therefore, we must be dependent on the Bible for our relationship with the Lord.
 - But the Bible doesn't just introduce us to God. It purifies us. (Psalm 119:9)
 - We cannot be sanctified apart from the Word of God. Our righteousness is as filthy rags; only by the washing of regeneration and the word can we be presented before the Father spotless and clean.
 - If you want to be righteous and pure and holy, you must be completely dependent on the teachings of the Bible.
 - Third, the Scriptures guide us. (Psalm 119:105)
 - If you want to glorify God in the choices you make, you must be dependent on the Bible as it reveals God's will to you.
 - So, we must be dependent on the Bible because it connects us to God, it purifies us, it guides us, and — lastly — it corrects us when we've gone astray. (II Timothy 3:16)
 - If you want to address the sin in your life from which the Lord has set you free, you need God's Word.
 - This means that Christians are to be dependent on other believers, the Bible, and — most importantly . . .

- **We are dependent on God.**

- Jesus prayed a lot (which in itself is instructional), but right in the midst of the longest recorded prayer Jesus outlines for us just how dependent we need to be. We call the prayer His High Priestly Prayer, and I want to quote a few lines for you. (John 17:20-24)
- To the exact same degree that the Father was in Jesus, and Jesus was in the Father, to the exact same degree that Jesus is one with the Father, we too must be one with God.
- This is a relationship of dependence — Christ in us, the Father in Christ, us in Him.
- This is so necessary because we cannot do any part of life by ourselves. (John 15:4-5)
- We must be in Christ as He is in us. This relationship is organic, symbiotic, and — from our standpoint — utterly dependent on Him because apart from Him we can do nothing.
- You don't need more independence from God. You need a *greater* dependence on God if you're going to be able to glorify Him.

III. How to Celebrate God on Independence Day

- **Preparing**

- Download our Independence Day Bible reading which includes the verses we discussed today and many more.
- Spend time reading through and praying through this list — reflecting on God's awesomeness to give us independence from that which kills us and dependence on that which sustains us,
- You can also redecorate your Celebration Walls to include verses about your independence in Christ and prayer requests for those who are stilled enslaved to sin.

- **Celebrating**

- On the 4th of July — or whatever day your country celebrates its independence or institution (or any other day for that matter — we recommend you spend time in God's Word and prayer and look for opportunities to introduce other people to the freedom God provides.
- National holidays like this are perfect for inviting over your coworkers and neighbors so you can get to know them better and have a chance to share with them the hope you have in Christ.

- **Discipling**

- In America it's too easy to get sidetracked by the explosive fireworks, delicious food, and inordinate festivities that the whole day goes by, and we give very little thought to the preeminence God is to have in our lives.
- When that happens, we're in serious jeopardy of having done nothing more than consumed those pleasures for ourselves instead of sacrificing them to God.
- Your fellow disciples need to be reminded of this as well. If you can do nothing more than point your family, friends, students, and other Christians in your life to the awesomeness of God on Independence Day, you've done something very powerful. You've become salty salt and a bright light set on a hill.
- Any time we deliberately purpose to point people's minds to reflection on God and admiration of what He's accomplished, we've done them a needful service.
- Make sure you don't forget to celebrate God this July 4th, and help those God has put into your lives to make the day about God.