



Celebrating the 4th of July and Our Freedoms By Karen Sue Nyquist

- 1. Why do we celebrate the 4th of July? It's our Independence Day!** - On July 4th, 1776, the delegates of our 13 colonies signed the Declaration of Independence, declaring that we were becoming an independent country, free to govern ourselves. You can read this inspiring document on our National Archives website (1) (Declaration of Independence, [https://www/archives.gov/declaration-transcript](https://www.archives.gov/declaration-transcript)).
- 2. Why did we decide to declare our independence?** - Here's a little history lesson. Before becoming our own country, we were a group of 13 colonies under the rule of the King of Great Britain. As time went on, his laws and policies became progressively more burdensome and his harassment through his officials, military, and laws became unbearable. After repeatedly petitioning the king, explaining their grievances, and receiving no relief, our founding fathers realized that it was fruitless. They met and, using the biblical values that were ingrained in our society, they drew up this document, signed it, and sent it to the king. Here's a quote from our Declaration of Independence: "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States." Next they included a list of 26 oppressive practices.
- 3. Was God working to establish this nation?** - Yes! Read on to see how God and His biblical values, helped establish this nation. God does not believe in coercion, in forcing people to believe in Him. He is a God of love (1 John 4:8). He provided us with a government where we have freedom of choice. Not all of our founders were Christians. Using men who were not perfect, God gave them the vision of a country where we are free to work to make it "a more perfect" nation. Below are what they believed and supporting biblical references. They declared truths that they themselves were not yet able to fully implement, but are supported in the Bible, God's word. They wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident
 - a. that **all men are created equal**, (Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28)
 - b. that **they are endowed by their Creator (God) with certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are **Life** (Exodus 20:13; 1:15-20; 21:22-25), **Liberty** (Exodus 21:16; John 8:34) **and the pursuit of Happiness** (Psalm 16:11; 144:15). —
 - c. That to secure these rights, **Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed**" (1)They realized that God had given human rights that no government should take away and that governments were to rule with the consent of "We the People" (https://www.senate.gov/constitution_item>constitution). Through prayer, God directed their steps to study Locke's Political Philosophy, to write the Declaration, then later our Constitution.
- 4. But did they really look to God for help?** - Yes! Our founding fathers said they were
 - a. "appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude (*righteousness and correct judgment*) of our intentions." (1)
 - b. They concluded by saying, "And **for the support of this Declaration**,
 - c. with a firm **reliance on the protection of divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." (1)
- 5. Why did our founders ask for God's support and protection?** Because they were rebelling against the British Empire, which had the strongest army and navy in the world. They knew that their lives, everything they owned, and their reputations could all be lost. That military was living in some of our homes, against our will. That navy was harbored in our ports surveying our actions. After we desperately fought the Revolutionary War for a l-o-n-g 8 years, God helped us win! **That's why we celebrate the 4th of July, it's our Independence Day!**
- 6. What kind of government did they establish?** - Ok, now for a short civics lesson. They established a Constitutional Republic. Our Constitution is the highest law in the land, it is an unchangeable, reliable foundation. A republic is "a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch." (Oxford English Dictionary) Because we vote to elect our leaders we are also a democracy. This is a continuation of biblical values as God had directed Moses to institute a representative government, where the people chose their leaders (Deuteronomy 1:13,15-17).
- 7. Why did the Constitution establish three branches of government?** - Our founders had experienced governmental overreach, where governmental power increased as the rights of the individual decreased. "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Lord John Dalberg-Acton). God warned about a powerful centralized government (1 Samuel 8:10-20) and focused their attention on one verse, on which they based the principle of the separation of powers. "For the Lord is our Judge (*Supreme Court*), The Lord is our Lawgiver (*Congress*), The Lord is our King (*President*); He will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). Also with the three branches, the



power is separated so each branch is to act as checks and balances on each other.

Hopefully, we are teaching our children gratitude for our Constitution and our Bill of Rights.

8. What is the Bill of Rights and what does it provide to us? - After passing our constitution, our framers added 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, that list some of the **freedoms, rights, and protections that every American citizen has.** We have:

- 1st - freedom of speech (Acts 5:27-29), the press, assembly, exercise of religion (but no establishment of a religion - Matthew 10:14), and to peaceably assemble to petition the government (Luke 18:1-5).
- 2nd - freedom to have and carry guns (Luke 11:21).
- 3rd - freedom from soldiers staying in our homes (Deuteronomy 24:10-11).
- 4th - protection from unreasonable searches and seizures of our belongings/property (Exodus 20:15; Deuteronomy 24:10-11).
- 5th - the right to refuse to testify against ourselves (Mark 15:3-5) and cannot be imprisoned without due process of law (fair procedures & trials) (Deuteronomy 19:15). Serious criminal charges must be started by a grand jury. A person cannot be tried twice for the same offense (Nahum 1:9), nor have property taken away without just compensation (1 Kings 21).
- 6th - the right to a speedy and public trial (Numbers 35:12), trial by an impartial jury in criminal cases (Numbers 35:12) and to be informed of the criminal charges against US (Matthew 26:59-65; Acts 25:27).
- 7th - the right to a jury trial in Federal civil cases (Deuteronomy 1:16).
- 8th - protection from excessive bail and fines and from cruel and unusual punishment (Numbers 35:11-12; Deuteronomy 19:17-20).
- 9th - additional rights that are not specified in the Bill of Rights.
- 10th - assurance that the Federal Government only has those powers delegated in the Constitution. If it isn't listed, those powers belong to the states or to the people.
- 13th - Later, slavery was abolished (Exodus 21:16)! During the Civil War, 198,000 Black Americans fought for their freedom and 40,000 died. A total of 642,427 Union soldiers and sailors died fighting to win freedom for those wrongly enslaved.

9. Why did they include "the freedom of the press?" - The press and other forms of media are to keep a critical eye on each branch, informing us what the government is doing. As long as the press does not become a "propaganda machine" for the government, it should report any activity that is corrupt or questionable. Then we the people can use our freedoms to speak up, ask questions, peaceably assemble, and vote; insisting that corrupt laws, procedures, and leaders be removed.

10. We should not take our rights, freedoms, and protections for granted! - Many other nations do not have these. We need to be awake, informed, and involved. "So far, the United States of America has been more successful than any nation in history in nurturing lives and things of value and sustaining freedom. This is primarily because of the way our founders set things up in our Constitution and Bill of Rights - our governmental "operating system" which assures individual rights and freedoms." (2) Losing Freedom: Socialism and the Growing Threat to American Life, Liberty and Free Enterprise, <http://www.politics-prose.com>>book

11. But America is not perfect, what should we do? - If we pray, asking God for His continued help (2 Chronicles 7:14) and follow His basic requirements, He'll heal our nation. What are His requirements? **a)** "And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). **b)** Follow His basic moral laws, the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). **c)** Speak up, stand up, and vote for His biblical values and candidates. Then we'll continue to have the freedoms needed for working to improve America, and we'll be ensuring that our rights, freedoms, and protections are passed down to our children and future generations. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 12 fought in battles; 5 were imprisoned, tortured, and killed; 17 lost their property (12 had their homes ransacked and burned). Also, 5 lost their fortunes while funding our soldiers; 2 lost their sons in the army; another had 2 sons captured; 9 fought and died from wounds or hardships. They gave their all to establish our United States of America. What are we willing to do?

12. Happy 4th of July! America is worth celebrating! - While doing so, you may want to thank God for giving us this nation and pray that He will give us the wisdom and strength to keep it. Please, come visit us where you can experience God's presence and learn about His Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, and His words in the Bible.

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