

Independence is the New Dependence

Rod Myers

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Today we celebrate as a nation our Independence on this anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The word Freedom is often used as a synonym of Independence. Freedom is also a word that describes our standing in Christ. "If Christ has set you free, you are free indeed." (John 8:36) All concepts are subject to corruption if interpreted wrongly or applied sloppily. It is possible in human affairs and in Christ to claim freedom every time we simply don't like what we are asked to do, whether by God Himself or by His human representatives. The Independence card is often like a trump card in Rook or a "get out of jail free" card in monopoly.

Perhaps we need to go back to the Declaration of Independence and see exactly what it says about Independence or freedom.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another,...

The Basis of this action:

- **that all men are created equal,**
- **that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-**
- **Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,**
- **But when a long train of abuses and usurpations,**

But this was done in order to:

- **and to institute new Government,**
- **to provide new Guards for their future security.**
- **That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown,**
- **and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power....**

This new Independence was ratified by the signatures of men willing to: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

This new nation did not create a “do what you please” people. It organized a new authoritative government with the “full power” of government and they bound themselves personally to this enterprise by a binding pledge that cost them dearly. Freedom is not free! They were pledging not to become another Britain ruled by a tyrannical king.

Harding University had a motto when I was in school: “Freedom is found in doing right.”

In Christ Paul gives us three Independence Principles found in Galatians:

Gal.5: 1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Principle One: Freedom leads to taking a firm stand not to be enslaved again by whatever enslaved you. (Sin, law, death, and condemnation)

Gal.5: 13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh ; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Principle Two: Freedom provides no excuse to indulge the flesh

Principle Three: Freedom demands that we serve one another humbly in love.

Independence is the new Dependence. It was the constitution that was ratified 12 years later (1788) that spelled out the obligations and the rights of the new nation. The bill of rights (first 10 amendments) was added to the constitution 3 years later in 1791, spelling out the individual and institutional rights of the nation-setting limits on the federal government.

In the same way, our freedom and independence was secured by Jesus on the cross, a freedom from sin, law, death, and condemnation and a freedom to love one another as Christ loved us. But, it took a number of years for the completion of the New Testament, the new covenant, to be written spelling out the details of this love that binds us together. Every obligation enjoined on Christians is rooted in love for God and one another.

Rom.13: 8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

James 1:25, 25 But whoever looks intently into **the perfect law that gives freedom**, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.