

CELEBRATE FREEDOM
Fourth of July Celebration
Next Steps Devotional Guide
July 4, 2021
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1. When it comes to the 4th of July, what are some of your best memories of it and why?
2. Over the last 245 years America has changed dramatically. We have had some very bright moments and some very dark moments. Our Founding Fathers, as they have traditionally been called, believed in “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for all Americans. Read the following quotes from 3 of them and then comment on each one individually what these mean to you¹:
 - a. Patrick Henry, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, said this: *“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”*
 - b. Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Father of the American Revolution, said this: *“And as it is our duty to extend our wishes to the happiness of the great family of man, I conceive that we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world that the rod of tyrants may be broken to pieces, and the oppressed made free again; that wars may cease in all the earth, and that the confusions that are and have been among nations may be overruled by promoting and speedily bringing on that holy and happy period when the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and all people everywhere willingly bow to the scepter of Him who is Prince of Peace.”*
 - c. John Adams, 2nd President and Signer of the Declaration of Independence said this: *“The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved independence, were the only Principles in which that beautiful Assembly of young Gentlemen could Unite, and these Principles only could be intended by them in their address, or by me in my answer. And what were these general Principles? I answer, the general Principles of Christianity.”*
3. Read 2 Corinthians 3:17, 1 Timothy 2:6a and Luke 4:18-19 from your sermon notes. When it comes to celebrating freedom, what do these verses say to you and why?
4. Read Proverbs 17:22 and James 1:25 from your sermon notes. Is there a connection between a cheerful heart and freedom? If so, how? If now, why not?
5. Think back over your life. List some of the top conflicts you have experienced. What were they and why would you put them at the top? What did you learn from them?
6. Read Ephesians 2:14 from your sermon notes under point #1-a under the heading, *“Two Types of Conflict Jesus Frees You From.”* Many people never experience freedom from conflict with God because they have substituted a relationship with God with their definition of goodness, or some tradition or liturgy. Jesus destroy that spiritual blockade. Do you believe your conflict with God has been resolved? If so, how? If not, why?
7. Read 1 Peter 3:8-11 from your sermon notes under point #1b under the heading, *“Two Types of Conflict Jesus Frees You From.”* There are so many relationships in conflict today. Take your Bible and read Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:23-24, 33, 38, 43-47 and Matthew 18:15-17. Why do you think so many Christians do not do what Jesus commands in these verses? Do you do this? Why or why not?
8. Most people know John 3:16, but yet so few even know John 3:17. Read John 3:17 and Galatians 5:1 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, *“We the people in order to . . .”* Some guilt is necessary become it lets us know when we have sinned and done something wrong. Yet, prolonged guilt keeps us from having a right relationship with God. Why do you think so many people do not stay free from prolonged guilt? Why do you think many people seem to not feel guilty at all?
9. Read Romans 5:1-2 from your sermon notes under point #2 under the heading, *“We the people in order to . . .”* You cannot celebrate freedom if you do not believe you are free from guilt. Is there any prolonged guilt you still experience today? If so, why do you hold on to it?
10. Read Psalm 107:41a from your sermon notes under point #3 under the heading, *“We the people in order to . . .”* Read the biblical word for “stress” and how this word was applied in biblical days. Do you ever feel like the worries, the concerns, the cares and the pressures of this world? If so, how can you celebrate freedom from stress?

¹<http://christianity.about.com/od/independenceday/a/foundingfathers.htm>.

11. Pastor Kelly presented data that compared the number of choices we had in 1975 verses today. Our choices have gone up exponentially. Do you think this adds or takes away stress in our lives? Why?
12. Read Psalm 29:11 from your sermon notes under doing #3 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* What could you do starting today to laugh more, to do some things that reduces your stress — to actually celebrate freedom from stress?
13. What would you say are your top fears? Why are these true for you? Read 1 John 4:18 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* Why do you think people have certain fears? How have your own fears kept you from celebrating freedom from your own fears? Based on 1 John 4:18, what is God telling you to do that will help you do this?
14. Read Isaiah 26:3 and Psalm 34:4 from your sermon notes under point #4 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* These verses stress that God has freed you from ALL fears. So, why do you think you still have fears? What does this say about you and about God?
15. When asked, most people will state they do not have enough money and they are far too deep in debt. We buy things with money we do not have to impress people we do not even know or like. No matter how many laws they pass, there is no secular system that can provide for all your needs.
 - a. Read 1 Chronicles 29:12 and Philippians 4:19 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* What do these two passages say to you about wealth, debt, needs and wants?
 - b. Draw a table with three columns. The first column put the word "needs." The second column put the word "wants." For the third column, put the words "debt due to wants." In each column list according to the column. What does this show you?
16. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9 under point #5 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* In what ways has Jesus Christ becoming poor make you rich?
 - a. Read Psalm 67:1-2 from your sermon notes under doing #5a under the heading, *"God blesses us for two reasons."* From looking at your own life, how does God get the glory from the blessings He has given to you?
 - b. Read Luke 16:9 and James 1:17 from your sermon notes under point #5b under the heading, *"God blesses us for two reasons."* Look at your own life. How would other people say God's blessings to you have blessed them? — You may want to go ask some people who know you.
 - c. Read 1 Chronicles 29:11 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* We are very vulnerable to use pronouns such as "my, mine" when it comes to material blessings. How intentional are you to make sure people are aware of what 1 Chronicles 29:11 says from your own life?
 - d. Read Psalm 107:9 and 1 Timothy 6:17 from your sermon notes under point #5 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* Money never can bring lasting happiness. It is no wonder that the U.S. Treasury Department puts on our currency an eagle — to remind us money can fly away at any time. In what areas of your life do you need to confess to God that some of your financial decisions have ended up putting you under duress and stress? Besides confession, what can you do to take personal responsibility for this?
17. No one is immune to depression. There are all types of depression. There is seasonal depression. There is postpartum depression. There is psychotic depression. There is by-polar depression. There is chronic depression. And there is circumstantial depression. Everyone bottoms out. Everyone has a low moment. Even Jesus did in Luke 22:42. When have been yours and why?
18. When a Christian does not know and do God's purpose for their lives, they are going to experience depression. God's purpose for your life has nothing to do with your career. It has to do with building God's kingdom. Do you know and are you do God's specific purpose for your and are you doing it? Why or why not?
19. The reason so many people feel hopeless — feel that things will never change — is they are too focus on trying to control and change everyone and everything else around them rather than allowing God to change them to His purpose for their life. Read Acts 17:26-28a from your sermon notes under point #6 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* How does finding and doing God's purpose for you life give you freedom?
20. Read John 8:36 and 1 Peter 1:2c from your sermon notes under doing #6 under the heading, *"We the people in order to . . ."* How would you like God to do in your own life what is found in these passages?