

The 7 Principles Summarized

Max Lyons, Ph.D.

What are the Seven Principles of Liberty? These basic, Biblical principles are the pathway to restore and maintain our Constitutional liberty.

Today, if we would preserve both liberty of conscience and civil liberty for every individual in America, we must base our convictions in every issue on the principles that built our American Christian Constitution.

Liberal pundits most often sway public opinion by debating issues. However, Christians can once again win the day by learning to present the principles of liberty because principles always trump issues. This is the pathway forward to restore our nation to truth and life.

These Seven Principles of Liberty are based in three foundational ideas:

- How the character of America is formed in the Christian home, the Christian church and the Christian school
- How the property of conscience is the end and purpose of government
- How the study and embodiment of basic Christian constitutional principles can be delegated to every aspect of the individual's spheres of self-government: home, business, school, social and political circles

What is liberty and how do we keep it?

"[T]he only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments." Benjamin Rush, *On the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic*, 1806

God designed us for liberty. The Bible teaches that, "we are called to liberty" (Galatians 5:13). What are the Biblical principles essential for liberty in a nation? Individuality, limited government, Christian self-government, Christian character, private property, local self government and union- these principles were once commonly understood and applied in American culture. The only hope for us as individuals and our institutions is to once again embrace God's truth in the totality of our lives.

God's Principle of Individuality

The people are the only legitimate fountain of power, and it is from them that the constitutional charter, under which the several branches of government hold their power, is derived. James Madison

Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis observed, "America has believed that in differentiation, not in uniformity, lies the path of progress. It acted on this belief; it has advanced human happiness, and it has prospered." And yet everywhere in our nation individuality is under attack through the false ideas of collectivism, multiculturalism and identity politics. Our sovereign God created each individual with a unique purpose and identity. We understand and restore the Christian vs the pagan view of God and man, that "in the eye of God, all men are equal...individuals have an independent value...man is superior to the State, which ought to be fashioned for his use" (CHOC, p.2).

The Christian Principle of Self Government

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." John Adams, Address to the Military, 1798

This principle concerns the all-important question, "How should man best be controlled?" The Bible puts it this way: will we control ourselves or will we demand to be controlled by others (parents, employers, spouses, teachers, or civil governments)? As individuals, we all realize that we need to practice self-control, a fruit of the spirit. As parents, we want to know what would be the best way to bring up and nurture our children, how to best control them, and how to teach them to control themselves. Church leadership struggles with how to restrain sin and encourage the doing of good. Businesses suffer when employees and customers do not practice self-restraint. Finally, civil governments are faced with the question of what their role is in the control of man. This is an issue that affects all of us daily, in numerous and profound ways. Ultimately, liberty exists in proportion to Christian self-government.

America's Heritage of Christian Character

"To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea." James Madison

Sadly we are witnessing the death of our republican form of government. This is primarily due to a loss of our national character. Our second president, John Adams rightly observed:

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

A people cannot remain free under a republican form of government unless they remain virtuous and morally upright.

Conscience is the Most Sacred of all Property

“Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience.”
George Washington

“The rights of persons, and the rights of property, are the objects, for the protection of which Government was instituted.” James Madison

Life and liberty are secure only as the right of private ownership of property is strictly protected. Both internal (conscience) and external (land, houses, etc.) property must be protected from the continual assaults upon them. The primary function of civil government is the protection of property (both internal and external.) Today’s civil governors have become tyrannical, where instead of protecting property, they become involved in illegally confiscating property, in the name of “redistributing wealth.” Our conscience, what James Madison refers to as our most sacred property, is violated in numerous ways, most recently under the guise of preventing “discrimination.”

The Christian Form of Our Government

"Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." President John Adams. Military Address – October 11, 1798

Noah Webster correctly observed, “Almost all the civil liberty now enjoyed in the world owes its origin to the principles of the Christian religion...The religion which has introduced civil liberty, is the religion of Christ and his apostles.” Governmental forms are not equal; the freest form of government is one that is Biblical, embodying these aspects: a written constitution, separation of powers, fixed equally applied laws, protection of equal rights, systems of checks and balances, maximization of individual liberties particularly freedom of religion and liberty of conscience. The American founders bequeathed us a Christian form of government and we are tasked with its stewardship. Will we be “good and faithful stewards” for our Lord?

How the Seed of Local Self Government is Planted

"The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position." George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796

The family is the first level of local self-government. It is at this level that God has designed most of the functions of life to take place: material provision, nurture and raising of children, including their education, medical needs, and spiritual development. It is God's plan and purpose that these essentials of life are taken care of at the most basic level of government, the family, rather than at a more centralized level of government, whether it is the city or county, the state, or the federal government. This is the essence of the principle of local self-government. Only limited and carefully defined powers should be delegated to civil governments; all others are retained by the people or other institutions or authorities. The seeds of local self government are planted through Biblical Christian education. We must teach our children the truth or the lie will take root in their hearts and minds.

The Christian Principle of American Political Union

"Every man who loves peace, every man who loves his country, every man who loves liberty ought to have it ever before his eyes that he may cherish in his heart a due attachment to the Union of America and be able to set a due value on the means of preserving it." James Madison, Federalist No. 41.

Christianity produces civil or political union in a different way than the world does. It produces union based upon spiritual unity. Congregational clergyman Leonard Bacon observed that the early churches "became a community united, not by external bonds, but by the vital force of distinctive ideas and principles." The unity of believers eventually works its way from the individual sphere to the family, church and civil spheres. The best civil compacts are based upon voluntary union, ideally coming about as a result of a common belief in basic fundamental Biblical principles. America is an example of a nation that was formed in such a way.