

Daily Devotional, August 4, 2021 God as the Focus of Our Freedom

So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. Jeremiah 18:3-6 (NIV)

Though people in our modern day and age may attempt to deny it, our nation was founded on strong Biblical principles. Many of our Founding Fathers were devout Christians and almost all of them had deep belief in the sovereignty of God. In fact, George Washington said, "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God and to obey His will."

James Madison once said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." And Thomas Jefferson wrote, "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

Unfortunately, another Jefferson quote is often used to justify the removal of God from all aspects of society. In a letter to the Danbury Anabaptist Association in 1802, Jefferson wrote that the first amendment built "a wall of separation between Church and State," but this wall and his letter were meant to affirm their freedom from government intrusion into the life of the Church.

When people cite Jefferson's church and state separation statement, they neglect to mention that around this same time, he authorized the use of the U.S. Capitol for public church services, and he insisted that money be set aside in the federal budget for a Catholic missionary priest to the Kaskaskia Indian tribe. He also wrote the first plan for the education system in the District of Columbia and included the Bible and Isaac Watt's hymnal as the main texts for reading instruction. Jefferson's intention and God's plan for nations is never to remove God from their communal lives.

Beyond voting and praying today, we have little control over the halls of Washington, DC. We can lend our voice to the causes that are near to the heart of God, but how can we lead the country we love to honor the God we serve? We may not be able to turn all hearts towards God or to fix Washington, but we *can* allow God to restore us.

Prayer: Dear God, When we feel hopeless, restore our hope in who You are. Reaffirm our strength and hope that are found in You, and not what we see. Remind us of the purposes that you have for us and the resources to accomplish what You have called us to do. Remind us of your faithfulness and to not lose hope in Your goodness, provision, and sovereignty. Revive our hope in You to inspire, encourage, comfort, and restore all that has been lost and broken. In Jesus' name, Amen.