

Honoring Our Forefathers & Fearing the Lord

Thoughts on America 250 and 1 Peter 1:17-21

July 5th, 2026

Introduction: What a Difference 50 Years Makes

This weekend we marked the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. That we are citizens and residents of this nation is one of God's common grace gifts to us, and we should give Him thanks for it. Yet we live in a time when many of our fellow citizens no longer regard this nation and its founding principles as a force for good. Economic uncertainty and political conflict have always been part of life in a fallen world, but today there are competing visions not just for how we understand our future, but also our past. This is due in part to our loss of Biblical literacy as people. Consider the following examples:

“A Northwestern professor teaching students who had never encountered the word “Exodus.” A former University of Virginia faculty member undergraduates who could not parse Martin Luther King Jr.’s references to that same story — references that animate the moral architecture of the “I Have a Dream” speech and “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” A Bard College professor that “most students [are] completely ignorant of Bible stories (Hebrew Bible and New Testament) and history of religion,” adding that “we fail them by not requiring exposure to religious texts and tradition.”

—Jason Bedrick, “Losing—and Recovering—Our Religion,” *Civitas Outlook* (5/18/26)

“The notion that rights don’t come from laws and don’t come from the government, but come from the Creator — that’s what the Iranian government believes...the statement that our rights do not come from our laws or our governments is extremely troubling.”

—Sen. Tim Kaine (Foreign Relations Hearing, September 2025)

Main Point: The fear of the Lord enables us rightly appreciate the _____ blessings we have inherited from our forefathers without placing our _____ hope in them.

Initial Considerations

1. The freedoms we enjoy are derived from an understanding of God as _____ and mankind as His unique _____.

Gen. 1:27-28—27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion

Freedom of _____ →

Freedom of _____ →

Equality before the _____ →

Freedom to _____ our Leaders →

2. We honor the Lord as we _____ the good gifts that He has given to us through those who have come before us.

Eph. 6:1-3—1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

“By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God’s ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.”

- Westminster Larger Catechism

“That I show honor, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and all those in authority over me... for by their hand God wills to rule us.”

- Heidelberg Catechism

Prioritizing the Right Things — 1 Peter 1:17-21

Exposition:

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

- It is good and right that we have a special affinity for our nation and our people, but we are each accountable first and foremost before the Lord as _____.
- It is good and right that we have a special affinity for our nation and our people, but this is not our true _____ and we are part of a greater _____ (the _____).

18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

- As Americans, we have a wonderful inheritance from our forefathers, but it cannot _____ us.
- We give thanks for the material prosperity we enjoy, but our salvation as purchased with something far more _____.

20 He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

- Our true _____ is not found in temporal things, but in Christ.
- Our ultimate _____ is not tied to the future of this country, whatever that may be.

Concluding Thoughts

1. This country and the values it is founded upon is worth _____ for.
2. We do not fight, however, as those who have _____ hope.

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. – 1 Pet. 1:17