

*Through Christ we are free!
Blessings on Independence Day,
and prayerfully remembering those
who have sacrificed for the freedoms of our nation,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Metz
Steven, Sara, & Ethan*

Scripture Reading: Mark 6:1-13

*To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains,
but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.
—Nelson Mandela*

Today, Americans all over the world are waving the flag of the United States of America. Our country is 245 years old! The flag is a symbol of our freedom. But it is not the same flag that the signers of the Declaration of Independence flew on July 4, 1776.

When the flag was officially adopted on June 14, 1777 (June 14 is now known as Flag Day), Congress accepted the colors of red, white and blue, not because they had any special meaning, but because they were familiar colors. The flag of Great Britain from whence most of the colonists had emigrated was also of red, white and blue.

It was not until the Great Seal of the United States was established five years later (in 1782) that Congress assigned clear meaning to the colors of red, white and blue. Charles Thomson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, explained the symbolism of the colors:

“White signifies purity and innocence,
Red, hardiness and valor, and
Blue, vigilance, perseverance and justice.”

This is an impressive set of virtues toward which all patriotic Americans should aspire.

But they are not just secular virtues; they are sacred ones as well, because they dovetail with our aspirations as Christians, especially the last three: vigilance, perseverance and justice. Here is a Bible verse about each of these virtues:

Vigilance: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8, KJV).

Perseverance: “We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4, NIV).

Justice: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8).

As we wave our flag today to celebrate liberty and freedom, let's remember the meaning of the colors assigned by our country's founders. Even better, rather than just remembering, let's express these virtues every day of our lives.

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, we thank you for our freedom. Thank you for those who gave their lives that we might enjoy liberty. Help me today to live out the virtues symbolized in the colors of our flag. Amen.

HOME TOUCH® Activity Page

Week of July 4, 2021

DAILY BIBLE READINGS: Sunday: Acts 1-2; Monday: Isaiah 25-27; Tuesday: Isaiah 28-30; Wednesday: Isaiah 31-33; Thursday: Isaiah 34-36; Friday: Isaiah 37-39; Saturday: Psalms 70-72

July 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



Crossword puzzle grid with 29 numbered starting points for words. The grid is partially filled with black squares indicating non-letter positions.

**ANSWERS
NEXT WEEK**

DOWN:

- 1. Musical ensembles
- 3. Liberty
- 4. A binding together
- 5. Big stationary guns
- 6. He's on our nickels
- 7. Legislative authority
- 9. Love of country (adj.)
- 12. City of Brotherly Love
- 14. A system of representative government
- 15. A pronouncement
- 17. State of not relying on others

- 18. The Mayflower sailed from here
- 20. Explosive display
- 21. You might blow out candles on this
- 22. Orbs in the sky
- 25. Regional governmental entities
- 26. This month was named after Caesar

ACROSS:

- 2. Faithful
- 8. You can see them on our flag
- 10. Symbol of a nation

- 11. The first states were called this
- 13. A passport is proof of this
- 16. Gala
- 19. Outdoor lunch
- 23. The rules of our government
- 24. The redcoats
- 27. The legislative branch
- 28. It has a clapper
- 29. A once-a-year special day