

Friends,

This time of the year we are reminded of our rights and freedoms that come with being a citizen of the United States.

The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

In 1931, 155 years after the Declaration of Independence, and in the midst of the great depression, James Truslow Adams wrote the bestselling book called Epic of America.

In it he expounds on the certain unalienable rights that we have and coins the term the American Dream. *"The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."*

In short, the American Dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of their social status, can attain their own version of success and happiness through sacrifice, risk-taking, and hard work, rather than by chance.

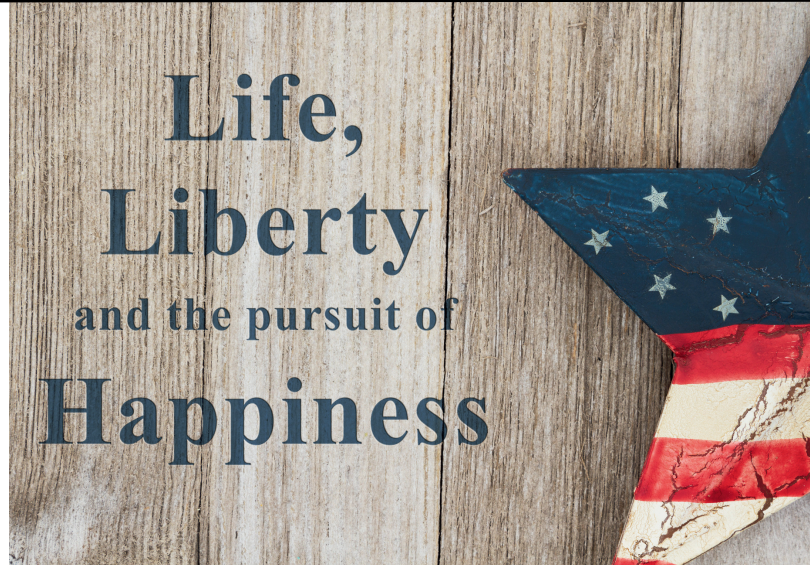
And here we are 93 years later, not in the midst of a depression, but certainly in a time of turmoil. So it's appropriate to ask, is the American Dream still applicable today?

In a recent poll, the Wall Street Journal asked its readers what they thought about the American Dream. This poll revealed that only 36% of people think that this is true, 18% said it was never true, 45% said it was once true but is not anymore. (<https://www.wsj.com/us-news/american-dream-out-of-reach-poll-3b774892>)

What do you think? After careful consideration I would say that the American Dream is still true today. But with this optimistic opinion comes some qualifications.

First, happiness must be pursued with the Word of God in mind. We are blessed to have the Declaration of Independence, but without the Word of God our pursuit of happiness is simply *vanity and striving after the wind*. (Ecclesiastes 1:14) Seeking happiness can become nothing more than the pursuit of pleasure and prosperity while doing one's best to avoid pain and hardship.

But we as Christians are uniquely equipped for a better type of happiness because we find delight in knowing and loving God, and we get fulfillment in walking in His ways. When pain and hardship come our way, we recognize that blessedness often involves suffering, persecution, and sacrifice. Our happiness is a gift from the One Who was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. So our happiness isn't dependent on pleasure and prosperity; rather, it comes as we align our lives with God's purposes for us.



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Secondly, we need to accept that true biblical happiness is dismissed by the world. My happiness is shaped by long-held biblical convictions, but I need to realize that other people have strongly held convictions that are anything but biblical that shape their idea of happiness.

It seems impossible for these two diametrical opinions to exist in a civil society. It's a difficult concept to grapple with especially in an election year where there is real concern on both sides of the isle as people fear that their right to be happy will be taken away.

We do have reason to be concerned, but whatever happens, we are secure in Christ. We have an inheritance that is *imperishable, undefiled, and unfading*. It is *laid up in Heaven*, a treasure no one can steal or defile (1 Peter 1:4). It is protected by the Lord Himself.

Because of this and our fundamental rights as citizens, the Mission will continue to reach the lost and gather the reached right here in our community for years to come.

Finally, we must live like the Kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus Christ reigns over every square inch of His creation, and He uses the power of His death and resurrection to make all things new. He is ushering in a new heaven and a new earth, where His justice and peace abound.

This is so much better than what the American Dream provides. Jesus restores His people, you and I, as well as the men and women that come to the Mission for restoration. He makes us His ambassadors, calling us to participate in His Kingdom work of making things new. What an awesome call we have!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US MOVE PEOPLE CLOSER
TO GLORIFYING GOD BY LIVING IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD, SELF, OTHERS, AND THE REST OF CREATION!

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

In honor of our Lord Jesus Christ
by Barbara Carse
and by Ken & Duabe Capp
In honor Tom Hehn
by Sean & Esther Hehn

In memory of My Brother Bruce
by Lynn Baker
In memory of Kim Badcock
by Lynn Casad
In memory of Nicholas Bargerrown
by Sherry Morrison
In memory of Harry & Corrine Belau
by Betty Hunter
In memory of Earl Best
by Nickolas & Lindsay Boosalis
In memory of Dane Black
by Joanie Ganong
In memory of Brien Blankenship
by Janice Blankenship
In memory of Jason Bourdeau
by Cheryl Schmidt
In memory of Wallace & Lucille Brill
by Judy Addington
In memory of My Brother Bruce
by Lynn Baker
In memory of James Estep
by Vivian Estep

In memory of Rochelle Roby Frymire
by Paul & Janice Roby
In memory of Pam Gaither
by Rosalie Gaither
In memory of Billie Joe & Joan Hunter
by Dusty & Debbie Hoffman
In memory of Glenda Kaiser
by Gary Kaiser
In memory of Cy & Helen Krebsbach
by Jay Krebsbach
In memory of Pat Lee
by Robert Phillips
In memory of Garfield Lennick
by Maureen Wiltrout
In memory of Tudy Maddow
by Gary & Nancy Payton
In memory of Ronelda McCollum
by Kathleen Frazier
In memory of David McVey
by Julie McVey
In memory of Don Mitchell
by Eunice Mitchell
In memory of J. L. Myrick
by Nancy Mitchell
In memory of Billie Ray Nering
by Ken & Diane Capp
In memory of Robert Olson
by Allan Olson

In memory of Patricia Piter
by Steve Piter
In memory of Tony & Evie Popson
by Sean & Esther Hehn
In memory of Pastor David Rapp
by Sherrill Hieber
In memory of Jim Ronda
by Connie Ronda
In memory of Zachary Russell
by John & Debra Russell
In memory of Nancy Scafani
by David Scafani
In memory of Jerry Scheid
by Jackie Scheid
In memory of Dorothee Shadzad
by Michelle Hobbs
In memory of Garland Shinn
by Glenda Riffle
In memory of Duane Shinn
by Dianne Carter
In memory of Marjorie Skeen
by Big Ken & Sandy Skeen
In memory of Griffin & Pat Wilder
by Grif & Kathy Wilder
In memory of Garry Wilson
by Arline Wilson
and by Betty Rule

Thank you for equipping us to restore lives in our community!