

Why We Should Give Thanks for Our Founding Documents

1Tim 2 ¹I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

* **What American** tradition supports our consideration of this topic?

"[M]ankind" cannot achieve "happiness," nor can "civil society ... enjoy peace and prosperity[]" without observing the moral principles and connections which the Almighty Creator has established for the government of the moral world ... [the] principles of society are the laws, which Almighty God has established in the moral world... [which] are as fixed and unchangeable as the laws which operate in the natural world" (Rev. Elizur Goodrich to the General Assembly of Connecticut on the eve of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, 1787)

* **Why does** Paul urge prayers and giving of thanks for all in authority? (1Tim 2.1-4)

* **Why have** Americans traditionally been very thankful for their founding documents, and why have citizens of many of other countries praised the same?

"America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed ... set forth with dogmatic and theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence" (G.K. Chesterton, "What I Saw in America" (1921)).

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. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ... (Decl. of Independence)

* **Why should** we be thankful still today for our Founding Documents?

* **Why have** our Founding Documents come under increasing attack?

* **What American** movement is largely responsible for that attack and why?

"If you want to understand the real Declaration of Independence, do not repeat the preface." (Woodrow Wilson, speech to the Jefferson Club of Los Angeles, 1911)

* **What are** the fundamental differences between the vision of the Founders and the vision of Progressives?

"We are not bound to adhere to the doctrines held by the signers of the Declaration of Independence," and that every Fourth of July, instead of a celebration of the timeless principles of the Declaration, we should instead take time to "examin[e] our standards, our purposes, ... [and] determin[e] afresh what principles ... [and] forms of power we think most likely to effect our safety and happiness."

(Woodrow Wilson, ibid.)

* **Name two** main views today of the Founding Documents.

– Progressive view

* **Once again**, why should we be thankful for our Founding Documents?

– Biblical/historical view

* **How are** “identity politics” used by Progressives today?

* **How is** this different from the anti-slavery movement of the 1700s & 1800s and the civil rights/anti-segregation movement of the 1960s?

* **Would we** have been able to abolish slavery under the identity politics model of modern Progressivism?

* **Have Progressives** been consistent historically in their support of “unalienable rights”?