



Small Group Study Guide

★ We People ★

July 5, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God we are so thankful for the freedoms we have in the United States. We are also thankful for the laws that help govern our nation. But we know that no law can inspire morals and virtue in us. Would you help us understand how to use our personal freedoms to honor you? We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Galatians 5:13-15 (CEB)

¹³You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love. ¹⁴All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: *Love your neighbor as yourself.* ¹⁵But if you bite and devour each other, be careful that you don't get eaten up by each other!

INTRODUCTION

The United States of America is a nation of laws. But laws don't inspire greatness, excellence, or virtue. In fact, when we confuse what is legal with what is moral, everyone looks for a loophole to serve his or her own interests. The rich rule the poor, women become commodities, and children become victims. The law causes us to look down. It takes something else to inspire us to look up.

Individual rights assume individual responsibility. We are a nation of laws, but we can do better. We as Christians are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to do unto others as God, through Christ, has done unto us. Leveraging our individual rights for the benefit of others will prevent our liberty from devouring itself.

QUESTIONS

- 1) What is your favorite Fourth of July tradition? What meaning does it have for you?
- 2) John Adams once said *"Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."* He is saying that if there is no moral consensus and sense of divine accountability, this grand experiment of personal freedom will fail. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- 3) Read Galatians 5:13–15 on the front page. Talk about some specific examples of what it looks like to "love your neighbor as yourself" in our current political landscape. In light of those examples, does this command seem practical . . . or even possible? Why or why not?
- 4) What are some examples in our culture of how individual rights are no longer anchored to personal responsibility?
- 5) In what areas are you tempted to exert your individual rights without regard for the personal responsibility that goes along with those rights?

FINAL APPLICATION

This week, as you interact with those who are different from you, what is one way you can honor God by doing what is responsible instead of what is permissible?