

JULY 4, 2019  
INDEPENDENCE  
DAY



*God's rule includes justice for all.*

### INDEPENDENCE DAY BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on this Bible passage as part of your Independence Day celebrations.

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Romans 13:1-10</b>	<b>Being subject to authorities</b>
	<b>Mark 12:13-17</b>	<b>Give to God what is God's</b>

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it." And they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Jesus said to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.

**Mark 12:13-17 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for Independence Day:**

Almighty and merciful God, for Christ's sake, guide the people of our country to fulfill the law by loving one's neighbor as one's self. Amen. (Romans 13:9b-10)

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Loving God, thank you for the amber waves of grain that provide food for the table and work for our hands. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13).



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### HYMN FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

*Mine Eyes Have Seen the  
Glory*



### CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- This national holiday celebrates freedom. Why is that important to you?
- What does it mean to you when the President of the United States ends a speech with, "God bless America"?
- How do we fall short of the justice demanded by God's reign? What can you do today to promote justice for all?

### DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 12:13-17.

The Constitution of the United States begins, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." Citizens of the United States of America have taken on the role of the "emperor" identified in Mark 13. Citizens elect the people to establish the laws to form that more perfect union, one based on justice, tranquility, a common defense, general welfare, and the "blessings of liberty" (Preamble to the Constitution). In Mark 13 the Pharisees represent loyalty to God and the Herodians represent loyalty to the government. Both groups worked together to try to trap Jesus, but Jesus rose above political and religious parties to state, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and God the things that are God's." Government has power and authority for civil order and justice, things God's rule also cares about. God's rule, however, is more inclusive. Everything belongs to God. As Christians we are committed to acknowledge and praise God in all things, including our prayers and supporting justice for all. How do you praise and honor God as a citizen?

*Pray:* **Dear God of the nations, give us the wisdom to choose justice for all and faith to trust in you. Amen.**

### SERVICE

President Dwight D. Eisenhower urged the United States Congress to add the words, "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. Today we say: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." As citizens we are committed to liberty and justice for all. What does this mean to you? How is this pledge recognized through your actions and words?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The Battle Hymn of the Republic was first written as a poem by Julia Ward Howe in 1861. Later it was set to music borrowed from a Methodist hymnal. It has been a tradition over the years for schools and churches to sing this song during patriotic programs. In the United States, July 4th is known for the many parades and fireworks displays. Organize a small parade in your home or backyard. Invite all ages to march together while singing or saying the chorus: "**Glory, Glory Hallelujah, Glory, Glory Hallelujah, Glory, Glory Hallelujah, His truth is marching on.**"

**Glory Hallelujah, Glory, Glory Hallelujah, Glory, Glory Hallelujah, His truth is marching on.**



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