



CHAPTER FIVE

The First Amendment

The five great freedoms of America

The First Amendment to the Constitution contains the five great freedoms of America. If someone asked, “Which amendment is the most well-known?” Many people would answer: The First Amendment. Why? Because it protects five of America’s most precious freedoms.

FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Five freedoms is a lot for one sitting. A good rhythm is three sittings: the amendment itself and religion, then speech and press, then assembly and petition with the family activity.

These freedoms allow Americans to worship God, express their ideas, gather peacefully, and ask their government to correct problems. The First Amendment reminds us that freedom is a blessing when handled responsibly. It also teaches us that freedom must be supported by wisdom. A lazy, immoral, and foolish people cannot remain free for very long.

EDMUND BURKE

Edmund Burke, famous for saying, “the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing,” also stated:

Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites...society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there is without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.

The Actual First Amendment

RATIFIED 1791

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

The Five Freedoms

The First Amendment protects five important freedoms. Think of them as the Five Pillars of Liberty.

1

Freedom of Religion

To worship God freely, without the government choosing your church for you.

2

Freedom of Speech

To say what you believe is true, even when others disagree with you.

3

Freedom of the Press

To report the news and share ideas without the government censoring them.

4

Freedom of Assembly

To gather peacefully for worship, meetings, and celebrations.

5

Freedom to Petition the Government

To respectfully ask our leaders to correct what is wrong or unfair.



Let's discover each one.

Freedom of Religion

What does it mean? The government cannot establish an official national religion or force people to worship in a certain way. This is what the Pilgrims fled from in England where there was an unbiblical alliance between church and state. The Founders didn't want that repeated in America.

There is no mention of the Separation of Church and State in our founding documents. The principle of the phrase, however, is found in the Bible. God does not want the church to run the state. Neither does He want the state to run the church. In that regard, there truly is a separation. Though true, our Founders also knew no nation or person was separate from the supreme authority of Almighty God.



Eventually that understanding was adopted by adding the phrase **One Nation under God** to the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance on June 14, 1954. This was encouraged by President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the Cold War when our nation was dealing with the Communist threat with the former Soviet Union.

Tragically, that threat has not gone away, young people. In fact, it is gaining influence in your generation. That is one of the reasons for writing this workbook on our American heritage.

WHY THIS STILL MATTERS

Communism and Socialism would destroy our freedoms and will hurt the American people. Everywhere it has been tried in the world the fruit of it has brought tremendous harm to its citizens. Young people, you must make sure Communism does not continue to grow. If not defeated all these precious freedoms you are learning about will be gone and you will become a slave to tyranny and suffer much poverty.

Freedom of religion also protects the freedom to practice one's religion without unnecessary government interference, while recognizing that religious freedom does not excuse unlawful conduct. In a sense, this freedom forbids the federal government from interfering with religion one way or the other.

One of the complaints against the Constitution is it did not specify the Christian religion and opened the door for false religions to be practiced. However, the Constitution was signed in a way that did mention our Lord Jesus Christ. It ends with this statement *“in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven.”*



Regardless, this means, young people, that you can worship God without the government telling you which church you must attend. You can pray. Read your Bible and share your faith without being persecuted. In some nations of the earth, young people are being killed, beaten, or imprisoned for going to church and worshipping God. With gratitude, therefore, we should count our many blessings.

Why was this freedom important?

Many of the first settlers came to America because they wanted the freedom to worship according to their beliefs in the Bible.

**The Founders believed
God gave men two swords.**



The sword of justice in civil government to restrain evil and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Romans 13:1-4; Ephesians 6:17).

The Founders knew one sword was for civil affairs and the other to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom.

REMEMBER THIS

God never ordained government to force people to convert to Christianity. There are some religions, like Islam, that prescribe that in their religion. It is convert or die or convert or become our slave. This is why Islam is not compatible with America's Constitution and the freedoms they secure.

Not so, with Christianity. The church does not use civil government to force people to become Christians. **It is through the faithful preaching of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit that God uses to convert people to saving faith.**

What does it mean? People may express their ideas and opinions without fear of punishment simply because the government disagrees with them. This freedom has limits. It does not protect every kind of speech, such as threats, certain forms of fraud, or speech that promotes other criminal conduct. For instance, people can use speech to commit perjury. Perjury is the offence of willfully telling an untruth or making a misrepresentation under oath.



Young people, you have the freedom to speak your ideas—even if others disagree. But freedom of speech does not mean we should say anything we want.

BIBLE CONNECTION

God teaches us to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). God wants to use our tongues in ways that promote wholeness that is a tree of life and health to those who hear what we have to say (Proverbs 12:18, 15:4).

What does it mean? Newspapers, magazines, books, television, and other news organizations are generally free to report the news and share ideas without government censorship.

Historically, a free press was an added check and balance to the freedoms of America. A free press helped people to know what their government was doing. People who report the news can ask questions and share information. Done right this helps citizens make wise decisions.



Today, we need more discernment when it comes to the media. Media used to report the news. Many times, the media now makes up the news. Sometimes, the media can be unfair. Those who report the news can have a certain view that they promote in the news. Sometimes it is not what they put in a news story, but what they leave out that can leave a false impression that distorts the news.

BIBLE CONNECTION

“Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.”

Romans 12:17

Honesty helps build trust. A free press is supposed to be fair, but sometimes they are not. Today, young people, you need to think through what is being presented in the news and not easily believe everything that is reported.

4

Freedom of Assembly

What does it mean? People may gather peacefully for worship, meetings, celebrations, or to express their opinions publicly.



BIBLE CONNECTION

God made us to thrive in social settings like family, church and community.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some...”

Hebrews 10:24-25

Since life can be hard, God created us to be social to have a family, belong to a church, make friends, and encourage each other.

What does it mean? Citizens may respectfully ask government leaders to correct problems or change unfair laws. This is called seeking a *redress of grievances*. Young people, if something is unfair, you may dutifully ask your leaders to fix it. Instead of using violence, citizens can use their voices, votes, and petitions to change what is unjust.



BIBLE CONNECTION

“But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Amos 5:24

God cares about justice. Once justice is established, mercy can more freely be extended.

WHY ARE THESE FREEDOMS TOGETHER?

The Founders understood that free people need more than one freedom. You might worship God but also want to speak about your faith. **These five freedoms work together to help people participate in a free society.**

Rights Come with Responsibilities

Every freedom carries responsibility.

FREEDOM

RESPONSIBILITY

Religion

Worship God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Speech

Speak truth in love.

Press

Seek and share truth responsibly.

Assembly

Gather peacefully and respectfully.

Petition

Ask for change respectfully and lawfully.

GALATIANS 5:13

Freedom is never permission to harm others.

The Bible teaches, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Constitution Fun Facts

- ◆ The First Amendment is the very first amendment in the Bill of Rights.
- ◆ James Madison wrote the amendments that became the Bill of Rights.
- ◆ The First Amendment protects five freedoms, not just freedom of speech.
- ◆ Many countries have constitutions, but not all protect these freedoms in the same way.
- ◆ The First Amendment limits the power of the government; it does not mean every person or organization must publish or agree with every opinion.

FOUNDER SPOTLIGHT



James Madison

James Madison is known as the Father of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. James Madison believed that liberty would be safest if government had limited powers and the people's freedoms were clearly protected.

FAMOUS QUOTE BY JAMES MADISON

"Conscience is the most sacred of all property."

WHAT HE MEANT

Madison believed that a person's beliefs and conscience should not be controlled by the government.

Words to Know

Religion

Worshiping and serving God according to the Bible.

Speech

Sharing ideas with words.

Press

Newspapers, books, television, websites, and other media that report news and ideas.

Assembly

People gathering peacefully.

Petition

Respectfully asking the government to correct a problem.

Redress

To make something right or correct an injustice.

Grievance

A complaint about something believed to be unfair.

MEMORY VERSE

**“Speaking the truth
in love.”**

Ephesians 4:15





COLOR IT IN

You finished Chapter Five!

The First Amendment — one down, nine to go.

BILL OF RIGHTS



1 OF 10

- 1 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of
- 2 Sharing ideas with words is called freedom of
- 3 Newspapers, books, television, and websites that report the news are called the
- 4 People gathering together peacefully is called
- 5 Respectfully asking the government to correct a problem is called a
- 6 To make something right, or to correct an injustice, is to it.
- 7 A complaint about something believed to be unfair is a
- 8 James is known as the Father of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
- 9 He said, " is the most sacred of all property."
- 10 Our memory verse teaches us to speak the in love.

Five Freedoms Word Search

Words run across, down, and diagonally — forwards and backwards. Circle each one as you find it.

M Y P B R M G J F M N D W K
S T D F E X Y L B M E S S A
P R U F R E E D O M U Z H G
Q E X W J X P R E S S R T C
Y B V N C O E T G P E E D O
A I B O C N I R J X X L H N
C L H S S E R D E R I I C S
M J T I H A F U U J Q G E C
O L U D P L X G F T H I E I
O X R A Q J B X R Z Z O P E
G W T M F Z O M E E X N S N
W N O I T I T E P C T V Z C
R G R I E V A N C E Q D F E
O P Z M G J O S Q X E P T A

WORD BANK

Religion

Speech

Press

Assembly

Petition

Redress

Grievance

Madison

Conscience

Truth

Liberty

Freedom



Two of these words are not answers to anything. They are what all five freedoms are for — and what we must guard for the generation after us.

Family Questions

Think Together

1 • Which of the five freedoms do you use most often?

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2 • Why do you think the Founders listed freedom of religion first?

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3 • What is the difference between saying whatever we want and speaking truth in love?

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4 • Why is peaceful assembly important in a free country?

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5 • What does it mean to respectfully petition the government?

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FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Question three is the hinge of the chapter. Let the child answer badly first, then ask for an example from their own week — a time truth was said kindly, and a time it was not.

The Five Freedoms Challenge

As a family, think of one example of each freedom.

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Attend church or pray together (Religion).

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☐

Encourage someone with truthful, kind words (Speech).

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☐

Read a news article together and discuss it (Press).

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☐

Gather with friends or family for worship service (Assembly).

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☐

Write a respectful letter to an elected official or community leader (Petition) to redress something that is wrong in our nation like abortion, promotion of sexual immorality, (Moral wrongs becoming civil rights) excessive taxation, restoring the integrity of our voting system, etc.

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Discuss how each activity reflects both the freedom protected by the First Amendment and the Biblical virtue that should guide its use.

A Grandparent's Thought

The First Amendment protects our freedom to worship, speak, write, gather, and seek justice. These freedoms have allowed churches to preach the Gospel, families to teach their children, newspapers to hold leaders accountable, and citizens to work for positive change.

But freedom alone is not enough. The Bible teaches that truth without love can be harsh, and freedom without virtue is licentiousness. This means a willful disregard or sin against the laws, rules, or moral norms of our nation.

The greatest use of the freedoms protected by the First Amendment is to glorify God, love our neighbors, speak the truth in love, and seek justice tempered by humility.

Liberty is one of God's precious gifts. May we use it wisely, courageously, and faithfully—and pass it on to the next generation.