



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

11th–27th Amendments

The Constitution Can Be Amended

MEMORY VERSE

“Test all things; hold fast what is good.”

1 Thessalonians 5:21

FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Seventeen amendments in one chapter is a lot to take in. Read two or three at a sitting, and ask the child what problem each one was meant to solve.

Why Are There More Amendments?

The first Ten Amendments are called the Bill of Rights because they protect many of our most cherished freedoms. But the Constitution also includes a way to make changes when the American people believe changes are needed and necessary.

These changes are called amendments. Since 1791, 17 more amendments have been added. Some corrected problems. Some expanded voting rights. Some improved the way government works. Together, they remind us that while the Constitution provides a decent foundation, it also includes a careful process for change.

It is the opinion of this author that some amendments like the 16th Amendment need to be abolished, end national centralized banking, and return our currency to be backed by a gold standard.



The Remaining Amendments

11 1795 Lawsuits Against States

12 1804 Choosing the President and Vice President

13 1865 Abolished Slavery

14 1868 Citizenship and Equal Protection

15 1870 Voting Rights

16 1913 Federal Income Tax

17 1913 Direct Election of Senators

18 1919 Prohibition

19 1920 Women's Right to Vote

20 1933 New Terms Begin Sooner

21 1933 Ended Prohibition

22 1951 Presidential Term Limits

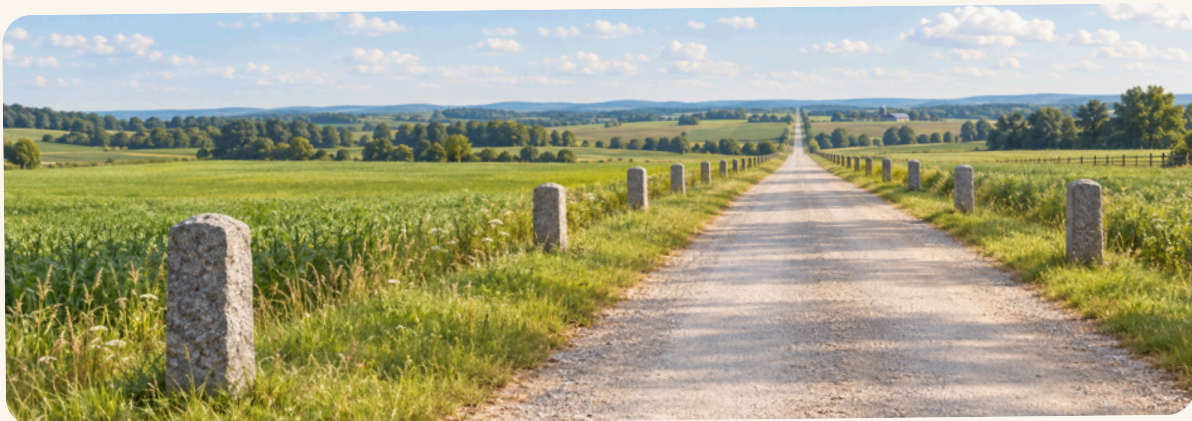
23 1961 Washington, D.C. Votes for President

24 1964 No Poll Taxes

25 1967 Presidential Succession

26 1971 Voting Age

27 1992 Congressional Pay



11

AMENDMENT 11 (1795)

Lawsuits Against States

This limits when citizens of one state or another country may sue a state in federal court. States have certain legal protections in federal courts.

12

AMENDMENT 12 (1804)

Choosing the President and Vice President

This amendment changed how members of the Electoral College vote for President and Vice President. It helped make presidential elections work more smoothly.



Abolished Slavery

This ended slavery in the United States, except as punishment for a crime after conviction. Every person is born with equal value and should never be owned by another person.

BIBLE CONNECTION

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 3:28



14

AMENDMENT 14 (1868)

Citizenship and Equal Protection

This defines national citizenship and provides that states must not deny any person the equal protection of the laws or deprive them of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Every person, including the preborn child in the womb, deserves equal protection under the law.

15

AMENDMENT 15 (1870)

Voting Rights

States may not deny the right to vote because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. One's skin color should never determine whether someone can vote.



Federal Income Tax

This allowed Congress to collect a federal income tax without apportioning it among the states based on population. Congress can collect taxes to help pay for the work of the federal government. It did a lot more than this, young people, that has not been good for the economy of our nation. Many of our financial woes stem from this amendment. Again, it needs to be changed.

Direct Election of Senators

Before this amendment, state legislatures chose U.S. Senators. Now the people elect them directly. Citizens now vote directly for their United States Senators. This was in keeping with authority being in more control of the people.



Prohibition

This prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages nationwide. America tried to stop alcohol by making it illegal. Though alcohol use can be destructive, this was a major disaster for America.

Because many people continued to want alcohol, an illegal market quickly developed. Criminal organizations, often called organized crime or the mob, began making and selling alcohol in secret. They operated hidden businesses called speakeasies, bribed public officials, and fought one another for control of the illegal trade.

In cities like Chicago, gang leaders such as Al Capone became wealthy through bootlegging—the illegal production and sale of alcohol. Violent conflicts between rival gangs led to robberies, shootings, and murders. One of the best-known events was the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre of 1929, when members of a rival gang were killed in Chicago.

As time passed, many Americans concluded that Prohibition was creating new problems while failing to stop illegal drinking. In 1933, the Twenty-first Amendment repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, ending nationwide Prohibition.



19

AMENDMENT 19 (1920)

Women's Right to Vote

Women gained the constitutional right to vote. Women and men have equal voting rights.

20

AMENDMENT 20 (1933)

New Terms Begin Sooner

This changed the dates when the President and Congress begin serving. New leaders begin their work sooner after elections.

21

AMENDMENT 21 (1933)

Ended Prohibition

This repealed the Eighteenth Amendment. States once again could allow alcohol under their own laws.

FUN FACT

This is the only amendment that repealed another amendment.



Presidential Term Limits

This limits Presidents to two elected terms. One person cannot be President too long. One of the Founding Fathers' great hopes was that America would be led by citizen-statesmen.

A citizen-statesman is an ordinary citizen who temporarily leaves his or her home, family, farm, business, or profession to serve the public—and then returns to private life when that service is finished.

The Founders did not envision government as a lifelong career like it is today. They believed that public office was a public trust, not a path to wealth or power. It is the opinion of this author, our nation returns to this practice.



23

AMENDMENT 23 (1961)

Washington, D.C. Votes for President

Citizens living in Washington, D.C., may vote for President through Electoral College electors. People living in our nation's capital can vote for President.

24

AMENDMENT 24 (1964)

No Poll Taxes

States and the federal government may not require payment of a poll tax to vote in federal elections. People should not have to pay money just to vote.



Presidential Succession

Explains what happens if a President dies, resigns, is removed, or is unable to serve. There is always a plan in our nation if the President cannot do the job.

Voting Age

This lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Citizens may vote at age 18.

Why did America make this change? During the Vietnam War, thousands of young Americans who were 18, 19, and 20 years old were drafted into military service. Many were sent far from home to fight in a dangerous war.

At the time, however, most of these young men could not vote because the voting age was still 21. Many Americans believed this was unfair. People began repeating a simple phrase, “Old enough to fight, old enough to vote.”



Congressional Pay

Any law changing the pay of members of Congress cannot take effect until after the next election for the House of Representatives. Members of Congress cannot immediately give themselves a raise. The voters have an opportunity to respond before the change takes effect.

One of America's oldest principles is no one is above the law.

The Founders believed that those who make the laws should also live under them. This idea is called the rule of law.

However, throughout American history, there have been times, even recently when Congress has passed laws that included special exemptions, different rules, or delayed requirements for certain government officials or groups. These actions have often led to public debate about whether such exceptions are just. Most Americans believe that lawmakers should live by the same laws they ask everyone else to obey.



What Can We Learn About These Amendments?

The Constitution is designed to be both stable and adaptable. The amendment process is intentionally difficult so that important changes receive broad support rather than being made too quickly.

As Christians, we should seek wisdom whenever laws are made or changed.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

James 1:5



Chapter Review

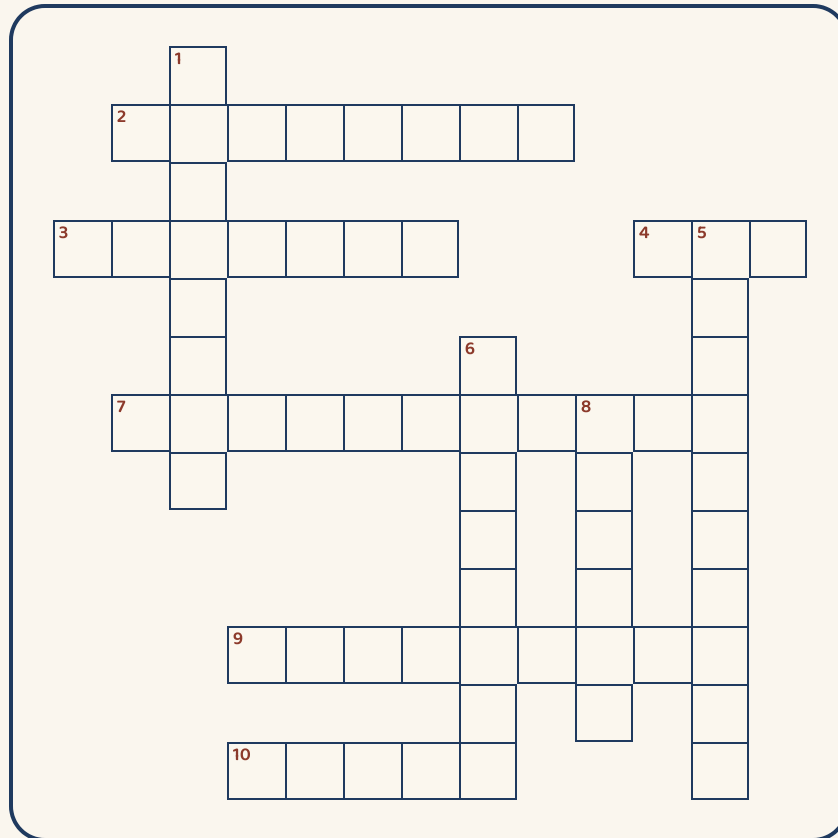
- 1 Changes made to the Constitution are called _____.
- 2 The Thirteenth Amendment ended _____ in the United States.
- 3 The Sixteenth Amendment allowed Congress to collect a federal _____ tax.
- 4 Before the Seventeenth Amendment, state legislatures chose U.S. _____.
- 5 The Eighteenth Amendment, which made alcohol illegal, is known as _____.
- 6 The Nineteenth Amendment gave _____ the constitutional right to vote.
- 7 The Twenty-first Amendment _____ the Eighteenth Amendment.
- 8 An ordinary citizen who serves the public and then returns to private life is a _____.
- 9 The Twenty-sixth Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to _____.
- 10 The idea that those who make the laws should also live under them is called the rule of _____.

SEVENTEEN MORE AMENDMENTS

You finished Chapter Fifteen! You have now met all twenty-seven amendments to the Constitution.

Later Amendments Crossword

Every answer comes from this chapter. Write one letter in each white square.



ACROSS

- 2 The Twenty-first Amendment _____ the Eighteenth Amendment.
- 3 The Thirteenth Amendment ended this in the United States.
- 4 No one is above the _____.
- 7 The Eighteenth Amendment made alcohol illegal. This was called _____.
- 9 A citizen-_____ serves the public, then returns to private life.
- 10 The Nineteenth Amendment gave them the constitutional right to vote.

DOWN

- 1 Since the Seventeenth Amendment, the people elect these directly.
- 5 Changes made to the Constitution.
- 6 The Twenty-sixth Amendment lowered the voting age to this. Spell the number.
- 8 The Sixteenth Amendment allowed a federal _____ tax.

Family Questions

Talk these through together before you write. There is no hurry.

1 • Why do you think the Founders made it difficult to amend the Constitution?

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2 • Which amendment do you think has had the greatest impact on America? Why?

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3 • Why should laws be changed carefully instead of quickly?

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4 • How can Christians pray for wisdom for those who make our nation's laws?

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5 • What responsibility do citizens have to learn about the Constitution?

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FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Question four is the one to end on. Before you close the book, pray together for the people who make our nation's laws, by name where you can.

A Grandparent's Thought

The Constitution has endured because it combines enduring principles with a careful process for change. The Founders understood that future generations would face challenges they could not foresee, so they created a way to amend the Constitution without abandoning its foundation.

As Christians, we recognize that while constitutions and governments may change over time, God's truth never changes (*Malachi 3:6*). Wise citizens work to preserve liberty, seek justice, and improve their nation while remaining anchored to timeless biblical principles.



**The Constitution gives our nation a framework for ordered liberty.
God's Word gives us the wisdom to use that liberty faithfully.**