

Henry Wolsten



“If You Can Keep It”

The Forgotten Responsibility of Americanism

“America isn’t special. America is just another Country.”

“America is Systemically Racist, and needs to be taken down.”

“I’m not proud to be an American.”

You hear these kinds of statements everywhere. From movies to news, to social media, books, podcasts, and modern education, they all seem to perpetuate that America is neither special nor exemplary.

It is in fact, a place to be looked down upon and judged. A place to be scoffed at, made fun of, and accused of crimes on the world stage.

Are these claims correct? Is America the land of opportunity, or the land of the oppressed? Is it a beacon of light to attract the tired, poor, huddled masses of the rest of the world, or a fiery bonfire, warning all who approach to keep their distance?

My answer? Israel is the nation God chose, but America is the only nation in the history of the world that chose God to be its leader. Our founding fathers were men of virtue, of principle, and most importantly, of profound faith. So much so they were willing to lay down their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, for the hope of a better tomorrow for their children.

How do we know this? They displayed it so often, others of the period had no choice but to be astonished. George Washington stepped down from power, causing King George III to think of him as, “...the greatest man in the world.”

They declared their beliefs and commitment to them eloquently and often, such as Thomas Jefferson’s “On matters of style, swim with the current, on matters of principle, stand like a rock.”

Our Founders fought and died for the opportunity to exist in a free and independent state, for liberty and justice to be placed as priority, and where self-government (not the federal government!) would keep its inhabitants in line.

Our Declaration of Independence and Constitution are among the most important documents in, I believe, the history of the world. They are works of genius, of ingenuity, and of divine inspiration, and I believe it shows today.

We are one of the only countries on the globe that have had the same governing principles laid out in a constitution, and stuck to those for over two hundred and eighteen years! To put it in perspective, a study by the University of Chicago Law School estimates the average lifespan of constitutions to be only seventeen years. That's a powerful example of American exceptionalism. America is exceptional not only in its founding, but also in its opportunity. Many from all over the world flock to the USA for a rare combination of freedoms found nowhere else in the world

- A free market economy, where no man is bound by his birth or his status to live in a set economic class for the rest of his life.
- The Right to own property
- The Right to defend yourself
- The Right to speak freely and openly on whatever you so choose.

All of these are natural, human rights, intrinsic to every one of us. That's why our founding fathers declared those famous words, "*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...*"

These qualities being respected and upheld is uniquely, distinctly American, and has been from the start!

However, sadly, if you look at the world today, many of the principles we saw at our nation's founding are no longer in place. The federal government's overreach into the average American citizen's life is such a horrendous travesty.

So what changed? America's founding was one of truth, liberty, and most importantly, freedom! So why can you look about today, and observe the many government legislations and overreaches that prohibit the average American from doing so many simple things?

For me, the answer is Apathy. Apathy is a disease, a parasite that corrupts even the strongest of institutions. The American people, as a whole, have become apathetic to their government, their country, and their duty to keep it the safest, freest nation in the world!

As a whole, our society has grown complacent. As the government has become more and more benevolent, and the further and further its tendrils have anchored themselves into the average American's life, the less and less liberty we find ourselves in possession of.

The Simple lies we've fallen for, believing in policies that would 'make us safer' or 'more secure', have been a ploy by those who've gained power to not only keep their place at the peak of society, but expand their jurisdiction as far and as wide as possible.

And the truth is, we the people have allowed it! We've sat back, content to let others do the fighting for us, while we go about our daily lives. It all comes back to Vigilance. In the words of Ronald Regan, "*Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction...It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them [our children] to do the same...*"

As much as we'd like it to, the sad reality is, no foundation lasts forever. Constant upkeep is required to sustain and keep anything in the natural world alive, and it would be foolish to assume governments would somehow be exempt from this fact of life. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, we have, "*A Republic...If you can keep it!*"

If we can keep it. Those powerful words are a call to action, a warning, a principle, and a way of life all rolled into one.

I'm personally a believer in the silent majority. I believe the majority of Americans are hardworking, authentic, good-hearted people, who just want to live their lives free of trouble. The problem is that the truths of this world are often quiet, soft, and unassuming, while the lies are loud, obnoxious, and right in your face.

So what can be done? How, as average citizens, can we preserve Americansim for future generations? What kind of America will we leave for those who come after us? Once again from Ronald Regan, "*.. or one day, we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.*"

The truth is, each one of us has the power to make a difference. To take time out of our day, our week, our month, and dedicate it to being involved, in whatever way we can! Perhaps it looks like volunteering at an event, sharing information, or perhaps it's as simple as meeting your local candidates and being informed on their stances and policies!

Every American has a responsibility, not only to themselves, but to their family, their friends, and their community, to uphold the traditions and values that made this nation great.