

GROWTHguide

"Dependence Day"

July 2, 2017



This week we celebrate our nation's birth on the 4th of July. Many of us will be traveling, enjoying outings, watching fireworks, or simply relaxing during a welcome time of summer fun with our friends and families. This week's Growth Guide offers you an opportunity to reflect and offer prayers of thanksgiving for the many blessings we enjoy during this holiday week and always. Make this holiday week a time of prayer.

DAY 1

Reflect upon the freedom we have to worship together every week without fear of persecution or governmental intrusion. Offer a prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ who must practice our faith under the threat of arrest and even death. **Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the way we Glorify God through our worship each Sunday.**

DAY 2

Reflect upon the freedom we have to criticize our government and elect our leaders. Contrast that with the way Jesus and his followers lived under oppressive Roman rule. **Offer a prayer for our leaders who serve at every level of government and ask God to instill in each of them courage, integrity, and a willingness to place those they serve above themselves.**

DAY 3

Reflect upon the sins you struggle with the most - pride, greed, self-centeredness - whatever sins burden your heart. **Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the atoning sacrifice of Jesus that allows us to be free from the bondage of sin.** Then ask the Holy Spirit to continue to strengthen you as you seek to reflect the character of Christ in all you do.

DAY 4

On Sunday, we sang a 4th of July favorite - *America the Beautiful*. Reflect upon the lyrics "*America! America! God shed his grace on thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!*" Identify the ways that God's grace is shed upon each of us and our country every day. **Pray for a day when brotherhood and sisterhood will be reflected in every aspect of our family, work and church lives, and in the relationships we share with our neighbors.**

DAY 5

Despite the fact that we live in a free nation, many people in America are not free of poverty, sickness, loneliness, grief, addiction, or broken relationships. **Pray for all those who suffer in these ways.** Ask God to help us be a congregation that reaches out to all who suffer so that we might be a beacon of light and hope in a world that is sometimes dark.

