

“The U.S. enjoys a scene of prosperity and tranquility under the new government that could hardly have been hoped for.”

--George Washington

Part IV

BUILDING A NATION ON SELF-EVIDENT TRUTHS

The following principles are derived from commentaries on these documents, including *The Federalist Papers*, and other more contemporary works. They are a shower of great ideas that can be applied to the home.

One: Government must strike a balance between too much and too little structure.

While too much government would lead to oppression, restrictions, and the violation of personal rights, too little government would lead to chaos, confusion, anarchy, instability, and lack of protection.

Application to the home: Too much parental control can suppress the right of conscience, free will, and initiative, whereas too little would contribute to disorder, chaos, and confusion.

Two: Governments are more easily controlled in small manageable groups and under the direct supervision of the people.

In other words local and state governments--nearer to the

people--are more responsive. Thomas Jefferson wrote:

The way to have good and safe government is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many; distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to [perform best]. Let the national government be entrusted with the defense of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the State governments with the civil rights, laws, police, and administration of what concerns the State generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties, and each ward [township] direct the interests within itself. . .by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best. (Bergh, ed., *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, 14:421)

Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman explains,

The second broad principle is that government power must be dispersed. If government is to exercise power, better in the county than in the state, better in the state than in Washington. If I do not like what my local community does, be it in sewage disposal, or zoning, or schools, I can move to another local community, and though few may take this step, the mere possibility acts as a check. . . .The preservation of freedom is the protective reason for limiting and decentralizing governmental power. (*Capitalism and Freedom*, p. 3)

Application to the home: The home is the basic unit of society, and parents--not the state--are the managers and governors of the home. The parents usually have the best interests of the child at heart and have a better overall picture of the child's strengths and weaknesses than any government agency can. Further useful application of this principle in the interaction of running the home is to inaugurate a system in which one older child is placed in charge of one younger child to see that the bedroom is cleaned in the morning, piano

practice is completed, homework is finished, and so forth. The older brother or sister takes a special interest in the child assigned. This eases the supervisory load of the parents, and teaches both older and younger children responsibility, as well as strengthening the bonds between siblings.

Three: While the citizen possess all liberty, except where violating the rights of others, the government has only the powers expressly granted it. (Not applied to home government)

Four: The people must be protected from tyrannical governments, and the government must be protected from tyrannical people.

It was recognized that there was both a dark and light side to man's nature, and because of this there was a need to protect the people from the government and the government from the people. They therefore proposed a safety feature that would provide checks and balances to the power of government.

The founders had a strong distrust for centralized power in the federal government, so they created a government with checks and balances. This was to prevent any branch of government from becoming too powerful. Congress could pass laws, but the president could check this with a veto. Congress, however, could override the veto and, by its means of initiative in taxation, could further restrain the executive department. The Supreme Court could nullify laws passed by the Congress and signed by the president, but Congress could limit the court's appellate jurisdiction. The president could appoint judges for their lifetime with the consent of the Senate.

Each branch of the government was also made subject to different political pressures. . .all this was deliberately designed to make it difficult for a majority of the people to control the government and to place restraint on the

government itself. (Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, p. 33)

Application to the home: The idea that there can be a misuse of power applies to the family as well. Parental power and authority is checked by the use of clearly defined principles, written law, and organization. These, at the same time, protect the parent from invasion of privacy and from power-hungry children.

Five: The more self-control in the people, the less need for external control--or government.

When the people govern themselves, there is little need for government; but when the people do not govern themselves, it becomes necessary to implement outside controls--laws and regulations. As Benjamin Franklin put it: "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters." Samuel Adams wrote, "Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt."

The Founders believed that virtue was a practical necessity for a people determined to govern themselves. . . public virtue represented voluntary self-restraint, a commitment to a moral social order, honesty, and obedience to law, benevolence, and a willingness to respect the unwritten rules and norms of social life. Whether this was a result of fear of God's wrath and judgment, or a pure love of others did not particularly matter. . . if there was insufficient virtue, then order would have to be imposed by force and coercion, by pervasive governmental intervention in individuals' lives. (Vetterli, *In Search of the Republic*, p. 4)

Application to the home: When children are governed by their own free will, conscience and personal initiative, there is little need for

parental interference. This idea is expanded in the principle on discipline.

Six: There can be no political freedom without economic freedom.

There are only two ways of coordinating the economic activities of millions. One is central direction involving the use of coercion--the technique of the army and of the modern totalitarian state. The other is voluntary co-operation of individuals--the technique of the market place. . .The central feature of the market organization of economic activity is that it prevents one person from interfering with another in respect to most of his activities. The consumer is protected from coercion by the seller because of the presence of other sellers with whom he can deal. The seller is protected from coercion by the consumer because of other consumers to whom he can sell. The employee is protected from coercion by the employer because of other employers for whom he can work, and so on. And the market does this impersonally and without centralized authority. . .Political freedom means the absence of coercion of a man by his fellow man. . .By removing the organization of economic activity from the control of political authority, the market eliminates this source of coercive power. (Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, pp. 14,15)

The Founding Fathers agreed with a philosophy of economic freedom as expounded upon by Adam Smith. His basic formula for freedom has six points:

1. Persons or corporations of persons do what they do best.
2. The people exchange their goods without governmental interference.

3. The people's needs are met on the basis of supply and demand, with no governmental monopolies.
4. Prices are set by the people according to supply, demand and competition.
5. Profits are the natural outcome of production and services.
6. Competition is looked upon as the means by which quality is improved, quantity is increased, and prices are reduced.

Simply the program of economic freedom is: freedom to try, freedom to buy, freedom to sell, freedom to fail. There are those who would disagree: "Oh, no, these things must be controlled and regulated by Big Brother who sees all and knows all. There must be rules and regulations to the money game, and we must make sure that everyone plays the game on an equal basis and that no one is allowed to lose." The following sheds light on the need for economic freedom:

1. Economic liberty is the result of abundance.
2. Abundance is the result of industrious and efficient production.
3. Production is the result of proper incentives.
4. Incentive is based upon reward--or profit. Man plants to reap a harvest--without the possibility of harvest there is no incentive to plant.
5. Rewards (profits) shrink with government controls, regulations, and taxes.
6. Consequently, government intervention to control the economy results in fewer profits, less incentive, less production, and less abundance for the nation and its citizens.

Application to the home: The key idea explored in principle ten on rights and responsibilities is Benjamin Franklin's precept: "Compassion which breeds debilitating dependency and weakness is counter productive." Children, in their immaturity, do not understand why they need to progress toward self-reliance; but parents realize that it is the very key to confidence and self-esteem.

Seven: Good governments enhance man's right of conscience rather than suppressing it.

The colonists in early America had already experienced the violation of one's right to conscience. They were not distant in time from the religious wars that had imposed upon the citizens the religious beliefs favored by the government. They wanted and demanded rights to privacy--especially the right to follow one's conscience. They believed that man was born with an innate ability to know right from wrong and to be guided in his quest for happiness.

George Washington wrote: "We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this Land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition, and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart" (Washington, George, *George Washington and Religion*, p. 192).

Application to the home: Family governments enhance the child's right of conscience through instruction and assistance in decision-making. The right of conscience is connected with the right of free will and personal initiative. Since children will ultimately govern themselves according to their conscience.

Eight: Governments are instituted for the equal protection of rights, not the equal distribution of goods.

Right reasoning suggests that if governments are to protect the rights of the people, the governments themselves cannot violate those rights. For instance, governments are obligated to protect man's right of ownership, but, in a socialistic system property is taken from one individual and given to another in the name of charity. In so doing the government violates the right of private property.

Suppose a kind-hearted man saw that one of his neighbors had two cars while another neighbor had none. What would happen if, in a spirit of benevolence, the kind man went

over and took one of the cars from his prosperous neighbor and generously gave it to the neighbor in need? Obviously, he would be arrested for car theft. No matter how kind his intentions, he is guilty of flagrantly violating the natural rights of his neighbor, who is entitled to be protected in his property. Of course, the two-car neighbor could donate a car to his poor neighbor if he liked, but that is his decision and not the prerogative of the neighbor who wants to play Robin Hood. But suppose the kind-hearted man decided to ask the mayor and city council to force the man with two cars to give one to his neighbor. Does that make it any more legitimate? Obviously, this makes it even worse because if the mayor and city council do it in the name of the law, the man who has lost his car has not only lost the rights to his property, but (since it is the “law”) he has lost all right to appeal for help in protecting his property.

The American Founders recognized that the moment the government is authorized to start leveling the material possessions of the rich in order to have equal distribution of goods the government thereafter has the power to deprive any of the people of their equal rights to enjoy their lives, liberties, and property. (Cleon Skousen, *The 5,000-Year Leap*, p. 116)

Essentially it boils down to this--the government cannot give to the people unless it first takes from the people.

Application to the home: The family is united to protect and enhance the rights of the individual members, not to distribute the wealth--unless the family decides that this is a proper function of family government. In violation of this, I have known children to assume ownership of their parent’s wealth, and parents who assumed ownership of children’s wealth. On the other hand, I have known families who pooled money for the benefit of all--sort of a family bank that was used for educational purposes, home buying or establishing businesses.

However, though a young child needs to be supplied with the necessities of life, an older child's initiative would be stifled by overindulgent parents, who kept on supplying every need. Just as it is wrong to steal property from another, so it is wrong to steal opportunities of growth and experience that ultimately lead to self-reliance.

Nine: Pure democracies have proven detrimental to the welfare of the people; republics establish a government by the people through representation.

This principle is highlighted in the Pledge of Allegiance: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands. . .

There are many reasons why the Founders wanted a republican form of government rather than a democracy. Theoretically, a democracy requires the full participation of the masses of the people in the legislative or decision-making processes of government. This has never worked because the people become so occupied with their daily tasks that they will not properly study the issues, nor will they take the time to participate in extensive hearings before the vote is taken. . . A democracy becomes increasingly unwieldy and inefficient as the population grows. A republic, on the other hand, governs through elected representatives and can be expanded indefinitely. (Skousen, *The 5,000-Year Leap*, pp. 153-154)

James Madison wrote: "Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. . . A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect and

promises the cure for which we are seeking.” (*The Federalist Papers*, 10:81)

Application to the home: Pure democracy--government by equal vote--is inappropriate for the home since parents have a divine right to govern or manage the home. The parents act as agents or representatives of the Creator. Children take part in the decision-making process, but the final authority belongs to the parents. Because of their greater perspective, knowledge, experience, and wisdom they have the greater responsibility. This idea is addressed in principles seven and eight.

Ten: Stability, order, and justice are better established by written law rather than by the whims of men.

“No man” John Adams declared, “will contend that a nation can be free that is not governed by fixed laws. All other government than that of permanent known laws is the government of mere will and pleasure.” (*A Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States*, 1:124).

Aristotle reasoned thus, “Even the best of men in authority are liable to be corrupted by passion. We may conclude then that the law is reason without passion, and it is therefore preferable to any individual.”

Application to the home: Principles in section four focus on the freedoms to be found through written law. Parents are set free from hassles; children are set free from injustice. Written--objective--law protects all from tyranny--the tyranny of parents over children or of children over parents. Written law is respected more when all family members participate in its creation, although parents must exercise their God-given authority in being sure that the law is properly framed.

Eleven: Governments exist to enhance individual and family rights.

In recent years the state has challenged the family in its right to exercise control over children. It stands to reason that if the state is going to expect parents to assume responsibility for their children, the parents must have the right to carry out that responsibility.

Summary

Parents, consciously or unconsciously, establish a type of government for the home--one of tyranny or anarchy, one of gentle persuasion or harsh force, one with or without regard for the right of conscience, one of written law or impetuous whim, one that fosters self-reliance or supports dependency, one that generates freedom or suppresses it.

Some have fallen into more negative forms of governing in the home--not out of an evil intent--but rather of ignorance and the natural inclination to follow in the footsteps of tradition. Our greatest tool in overcoming these negative forms is knowledge--the knowledge of a better way.

The ideas discussed in this chapter formed the philosophical foundation for the greatest nation in history. As the infant American republic grew in strength, the Old World looked on in fear and intimidation; their traditional foundations of government threatened. Time proved that these fears were well founded; in just a few short years the quest for freedom began to spread throughout the world. Beginning with France in 1789, sister republics sprang up governments modeled after the Constitution.

Today the significance of these ideas has been renewed as the spirit of revolution sweeps through the world. Firm and resolute voices in lands across the globe cry for representative-democratic government. Why now? No one seems to know; but like our American forefathers these peoples seem to have overcome all fear in the face of tyranny. Their courage and commitment echo the bold statement that closes our Declaration of Independence: “. . .with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”

