

# Ordered Liberty: The Forgotten Christian Foundation of American Freedom

*A Supplement to Ordered Liberty Reclaimed*

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We live in a time when Americans are divided, disoriented, and increasingly doubtful that our system of liberty can survive. On one side, people cry for freedom without limits. On the other, they demand order without liberty. Caught in the middle are millions of citizens—especially believers—who feel the weight of injustice, confusion, and institutional betrayal, but don't know how to respond in a biblical way.

What we've forgotten is that our nation was built on a principle far older than the Constitution—a principle deeply rooted in Scripture and long understood by the Church: **Ordered Liberty**.

## **What Is Ordered Liberty?**

Ordered liberty is not a compromise between freedom and control. It is the moral condition of a just society in which **individual freedom is exercised under the rule of law, and both the citizen and the government are accountable to a higher moral standard**. That standard is not invented by courts or crafted by elites—it is grounded in the eternal character of God and revealed in Scripture.

The Founders didn't invent ordered liberty. They inherited it. From biblical covenants, from English common law, from the Reformation, and from centuries of Christian political thought, they understood that liberty without truth becomes lawlessness, and authority without justice becomes tyranny. Ordered liberty is the balance between those extremes.

## **The Biblical Roots of Ordered Liberty**

The Bible is not a political handbook, but it speaks clearly about the nature of law, justice, authority, and liberty. From Genesis to Revelation, we are shown that:

- **God is the source of all legitimate authority** (Romans 13:1), and all earthly power is subordinate to Him.
- **Human beings are made in the image of God** (Genesis 1:27), and therefore possess inherent dignity, value, and moral agency.

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- **Liberty is essential to God’s design for His people:** “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1).
- **Authority is legitimate only when it serves good and punishes evil** (Romans 13:3–4), not when it becomes self-justifying or abusive.
- **Disobedience is required when human law contradicts God’s law** (Acts 5:29).

God’s governance of humanity is covenantal, not coercive. He does not force obedience but invites it, instructs it, and judges it according to His righteousness. This is **Scriptural Consent Theology**—the idea that moral authority requires voluntary submission, not raw force. It is the theological root of both conscience rights and limited government.

### **Ordered Liberty in the American Founding**

The American experiment was a deliberate attempt to apply biblical truths to political life. The Declaration of Independence appeals to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God” and declares that rights are **unalienable** because they are given by the Creator—not by government.

The Constitution does not create liberty. It orders liberty. It presupposes that the people are already free by nature and that government exists **only to secure those freedoms** (see Romans 13:4, 1 Peter 2:14). This is why our system includes checks and balances, separation of powers, and recognition of inalienable rights.

When James Madison wrote in *Federalist No. 51* that “ambition must be made to counteract ambition,” he wasn’t describing chaos—he was describing **ordered liberty**: a design in which power is limited because man is fallen, and liberty is preserved because law is anchored in truth.

### **The Church and Ordered Liberty**

Historically, the Church has been the conscience of the nation. In colonial America, pastors preached sermons on resistance to tyranny, the sanctity of property, the duty of rulers, and the moral limits of law. The *Black Robed Regiment* was not a militia—it was a generation of preachers who understood that liberty and righteousness rise or fall together.

But today, too many churches have surrendered their prophetic voice. They have traded the gospel of freedom for institutional neutrality. They obey every order, bless every regime, and preach Romans 13 without Acts 5. They have forgotten that the same apostles who wrote “Submit to authority” also said, “We must obey God rather than men.”

A church that cannot define just authority cannot defend liberty. And a church that fears confrontation more than it fears God will eventually become a servant of the state.

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## Why Christians Must Reclaim Ordered Liberty

We are living in a post-Christian culture—but we are not yet living in a post-Christian world. God still reigns. His law is still just. His people are still salt and light. And His standards for freedom have not changed.

Christians must reclaim ordered liberty not as a political strategy but as a **moral mandate**:

- To teach our children that liberty without truth is not freedom but rebellion.
- To hold our leaders accountable to the laws of God, not just the whims of courts or the language of bureaucrats.
- To resist evil—not in rage, but in righteousness.
- To obey only that which is **just**, and to disobey that which is **sinful**, even when it comes dressed as “public safety” or “equity.”

The Concord Principle of Resistance—a biblically informed standard for when protest and even physical resistance are justified—draws directly from Scripture’s teaching on innocence, imminence, proportionality, avoidance, and reasonableness. This is not civil war theology. It is the disciplined application of natural law and biblical ethics to civil disobedience.

## Ordered Liberty: A Christian Witness

Ultimately, ordered liberty is not about restoring America—it’s about restoring moral clarity. It’s about showing the world that freedom is not an idol, but a stewardship. That authority is not sacred unless it is just. That submission is not blind. And that God’s people do not bow to tyranny, even when it wears a smile.

The world is watching the Church. Will we model principled resistance to lawless power? Will we teach our people how to discern between righteous law and political coercion? Will we give the next generation a standard for liberty that is worth defending—or leave them to inherit confusion, cowardice, and collapse?

It begins with truth. It begins with Scripture. It begins with **Ordered Liberty**.

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