

SELF-EVIDENT

The Truths That Built a Nation

Young Explorers Edition • Grades Three through Six

LESSON EIGHT

“Liberty and Happiness”

The Words We Are Studying

“... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

The Big Idea

Real freedom is not doing whatever you want. It is being free to do what is right. And real happiness is living a good life, not just having fun.

Words to Know

Liberty. Another word for freedom. Real liberty means being free to do what is good and right.

Pursuit. Going after something, chasing it. The Declaration says we have the right to go after a good life.

Happiness. To the Founders, this meant living a good and meaningful life, not just having fun for a moment.

What It Means

The Founders named two more rights: liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But they meant something deeper than most people think.

Liberty means freedom. But real freedom is not doing whatever you feel like. If you only did whatever you wanted, you might eat candy all day and never brush your teeth! Real liberty is being free to do what is right and good. The more you learn to control yourself, the freer you actually become.

And the pursuit of happiness did not mean just having fun. To the Founders, happiness meant living a good life full of purpose, doing what is right, helping others, and becoming the person God made you to be.

A Picture to Help You Remember

Think about a kite. A kite is not free when it breaks its string and flies away, because then it just crashes. A kite is truly free to soar when it is connected to the string and flown the right way.

You are like that kite. Real freedom is not breaking every rule. It is being connected to what is good and true, so you can soar. That is the kind of liberty the Founders wanted for you.

What a Founder Said

“*Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People.*”

— John Adams, in a letter, 1798

In plain words: Freedom only works when people try to be good. A free country needs people who do the right thing.

Why It Matters for You

You can practice real freedom by learning to do what is right even when no one is watching. That kind of self-control actually makes you more free, not less.

And you can chase real happiness by living for something bigger than just fun, like loving God, helping your family, and being a good friend.

Let’s Talk About It

1. What is the difference between doing whatever you want and real freedom?
2. How is a kite a good picture of true liberty?
3. What did the Founders really mean by the pursuit of happiness?
4. What is one good thing you could pursue that would make your life meaningful?

Try This

If you can, fly a kite or watch a video of one. Notice how the string helps it soar. Talk about how rules and doing right can actually help you be more free, like the string helps the kite.

A Verse to Remember

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)