

Henry and other patriots were willing to die for freedom, certainly we should *live* for freedom. We face the continued struggle for liberty. Battles lie ahead. We are in continual warfare. These are facts that we must accept honestly as we consider Patrick Henry's words back in 1775:

"The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is not too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery!"

A State of War

Today, free people are in a state of warfare—a continued battle prompted by those who oppose freedom. We need to acknowledge our current challenge to keep alive the spirit of freedom and to strengthen freedom.

First, we need an honest, sincere, and broad understanding of the basics of freedom. We cannot very well defend that which we cannot adequately explain and present to other people. We should ask ourselves how well we truly understand such principles of freedom as the free-market exchange of goods and services . . . personal freedom/accountability . . . no coercion against law-abiding citizens . . . voluntary cooperation . . . limited, strictly defined government power.

Do we understand these princi-

ples? Are we doing what we can to understand them better?

Second, in order to rejuvenate the spirit of freedom, we must practice the freedom faith continually, consistently, and earnestly in *our own personal lives*. Some warriors for the cause of freedom know the ABCs on the subject, and they are on the battlefronts, such as actively campaigning for pro-freedom candidates for Congress.

Such "activism" is to be cheered and encouraged, but woe! Some of those hard-charging freedom warriors will (1) on Monday, demand the total elimination of the federally funded Legal Services Corporation, but (2) on Tuesday lobby the federal government for an increase in federal subsidies and low interest loans for farmers. The wayward, backslidden freedom troopers in this case are an association of farmers who are more interested in their "special interest" than in individual freedom and responsibility.

No, we cannot have that type of inconsistency if the spirit of freedom is to be enhanced and strengthened.

Third, we must diligently protect freedom. Patrick Henry advised that those who would defend liberty must be strong, active, brave, and vigilant. "Vigilance is the price of liberty," and today we should be vigilant—seeing where and how freedom is being undermined.

For example, we ought to see that

many reporters, commentators, editors, publishers, and anchor persons are not the fair, objective, accurate, and honest news people they would like us to believe. Instead, they are prejudiced against freedom. They show a clear bias in favor of more government—a support for more government intervention that daily translates into a corruption of the truth.

A good portion of the major news media people have a personal belief that the government should be spending more—not less—for education, the arts, welfare, health, and the like. They personally believe that government regulations and programs—not free people working freely in a free society—are the best way to make sure individuals are sufficiently housed, clothed, fed, and given proper medical care.

Even though we may have a very sound grasp of the basics of freedom, we must be vigilant to the distortions, half-truths, and slanted reporting we receive from media sources around us.

Fourth, we should be earnest spokesmen for freedom, actively taking a part in the current battles affecting our daily lives. It isn't enough to appreciate the writings of Bastiat, Jefferson, Burke, Tocqueville, and Ludwig von Mises. Nor do we accomplish much by railing at the supper table about Congress's latest

repudiation of the oath of office to defend the Constitution of the United States. Rather, we should practice what we preach by becoming intelligently, firmly, and consistently involved defending freedom, explaining it, and strengthening it.

Words of Wisdom

Two men who signed the Declaration of Independence back in 1776 still speak to us as we seek to learn more about freedom. "A wise and frugal government," advises Thomas Jefferson, "which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government. . ."

Dr. John Witherspoon, the only active clergyman to sign the Declaration, gives us a final insight into the spirit of freedom:

"A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery will ensue. On the other hand, when the manners of a nation are pure, when true religion and internal principles maintain their vigor, the attempts of the most powerful enemies to oppress them are commonly baffled and disappointed."