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## The freedom of self-government

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On July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1976, I was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania standing near the Liberty Bell. It was an amazing moment. I thought of the sacrifices people made to stand up for their right to self-government. That's what July 4th represents to me – the freedom of self-government. We are free to govern ourselves through God. Many people in the United States celebrate national self-government - "one nation under God", on July 4<sup>th</sup>, but we can also celebrate individual self-government. We can celebrate being free to worship God. We can celebrate being free to turn to God in prayer at any moment. We are free to be who we really are, the beloved son and the beloved daughter of God. Being self-governed isn't ignoring the rules. It's total freedom within the rules, within God's rules. We are free to be good. We are free to do good and to be good. I am free to be happy. No matter what has happened the moment before, I am free to be happy right now. I am free to be wise. I am free to be forgiving. I am free to be innocent. You are free. In this moment, you are free to be who you really are, the beloved creation of God.