

## Lesson #61 Constitution Lecture #5 Securing Rights

Intro: While the first purpose of government is to protect citizens from foreign and domestic threats, it must also undertake other essential actions in order to secure natural rights. These include the protection of property rights, the defense of religious liberty, and the promotion of the moral character necessary to sustain free government.

Founders understanding of economics, character/virtue and religion.

- Basic duty of government is to secure and protect natural rights. 1. Armed forces to protect against foreign threats. 2. Criminal law to protect against domestic threats.

- There is an important but secondary roles of government in protecting our rights.

Property: Protecting of the right to possess and acquire property. How does one acquire property if you haven't any?

NOTE: all the natural rights that founders talk about are also to some degree in conflict with one another.

- Must set things up so that poor people can also acquire property.

- Everyone must have ability to acquire property because we all have a right to life i.e. make a living to survive.

- A registry idea was put into place so anyone can go and find out who owns what? Can be defended in court.

- Founders believed that wealth and property should be widely owned and widely spread. Not a small group or corporations owning most of wealth and property.

- In order to own, the founders also stressed FREE MARKETS.

- 3 things government needs to do to protect FREE MARKETS. 1. protect the right to buy and sell. 2. Equal access to transportation and means of communications. ie.

privileges of citizenship. this meant that free markets were for american citizens not other overseas. They believed that foreign commerce is OK but should be regulated for the interests and rights of Americans. i.e. national defense so we need to make our own guns and bullets. 3. Produce reliable and sound money i.e. silver and gold coin. No paper money because government could manipulate value of paper money. Didn't want government to control the value of currency. God standard is better.

- Also a need for welfare. Government should help poor people. Only for citizens in dire need.

- Provided at a level so that is made it so that people really didn't want to be on welfare. Founders also required work for those on welfare.

Government Involvement with Morality: Promotion of morality necessary for citizens in a free society.

- Necessity of government.

- The basic rules of natural law are moral rules.

- Jefferson: the moral laws of our nature.

- It's immoral to rule over other nations with out their consent.

- By morality we also refer to the disposition of the character.

- Virginia Constitution, 1776: "No free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people, but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality and virtue."
- One can't have a free government unless the people are basically good and decent.
- Also moral to have courage to fight for freedom.
- How did government promote morality: 1. Education through state level.
- Morality was sanctioned by government especially in marriage and family law. Sex cannot be unregulated because are the result. Children are vulnerable creatures and need help.
- the ones best to look after the best interests of the children are the biological parents.
- The rights and duties in marriage were designed to greatly benefit both the husband and the wife.

#### The Founders and Religious Liberty.

- Support of religion and a proper understanding of religious liberty.
- It never was an absolute right in the founding of America. One couldn't interpret the will of God for you IF it violated the normal rules of society i.e. protect life, liberty and property.
- e.g. Child sacrifice is prohibited.
- Government cannot take away the right to religious freedom.
- Schools should promote prayer and a general consensus of Christianity. Taught morals.
- Founders thought that teaching religion was GOOD FOR THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS.
- G. Washington in his farewell address: "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." i.e. no religion = no morality.