



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

### **Independent (Old Testament book of Judges)**

**July 7, 2021**

Word for this week! The week of July 4<sup>th</sup>! Independent, independence! Seems to be an especially appropriate Wednesday WOW.

I briefly share a section from the Old Testament where the desire to be independent got God's people in trouble. The book of Judges—a major problem of the book is the desire of Israel to be independent.

While our US psyche, culture, society values independence, the thesaurus shows the possibility of problems. Listen to some of the possible synonyms—unrestrained, autonomous, self-governing, self-reliant, uncontrolled, unrestricted.

The prologue of the book of Judges tells of a people who were forgetting God, a new generation that did not remember, a new generation that wanted independence.

The body of the book describes a repeated cycle of walking away from God, oppression, distress, and God's deliverance. The deliverers God used were often themselves unrestrained and vicious men, far from moral heroes.

The epilogue to the book describes this time period in Israel's history in another way—a time of moral corruption, when everyone did what they wanted to do, what seemed fitting in their own eyes. Independent thinking that inevitably leads to selfishness.

The Old Testament book of Judges. In a culture that values independence – my rights, my independence, my way – here is a book that warns us against unbridled independent thinking. Faithfulness to God always involves escaping the allurements around us.

If we as Christians would not be overwhelmed and absorbed by the world around us, let us recommit to a relationship of dependency on God. Looking ahead to the “rest of the story,” over 500 years later, the Wisdom writers and the prophets will echo the same truths – there is a way that seems right to us but it is the way of death. It is not within the human capacity to direct our own steps.

After celebrating our national independence, I vote for a good dose of God-dependence, a first step toward focused, God-directed, controlled lives that bring glory to God.