



W. James Steen, CFP®  
[jim@petrafin.com](mailto:jim@petrafin.com)

Jason A. Pearson, CFP®  
[jason@petrafin.com](mailto:jason@petrafin.com)

(O) 937.294.9000

[www.petrafinancialsolutions.com](http://www.petrafinancialsolutions.com)

As we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of our nation, we still remain indebted to the men and women who conceived, fought for, and won the battle for independence.

We rightly venerate our Founders. Some we know by their monumental reputations. Countless tens of thousands we will never know for they were often buried in unmarked shallow graves.

To me, it appears our great nation struggles to right itself. We need again the great purposes which united a disparted band of squabbling colonists and created the greatest home for mankind on this Earth.

With this preface in mind, as you celebrate with picnic, parades, or just a day off, take a few minutes and read this to your family. Then pass it on.

### The Founders Speak

“Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right...and a desire to know; but besides this, they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers.”

*John Adams*

“They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.”

*Benjamin Franklin*

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

*John Adams October 11, 1798*

“God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift from God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever.” *(excerpts are inscribed on the walls of the Jefferson Memorial in the nation’s capitol) [Source: Merrill . D. Peterson, ed., Jefferson Writings, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), Vol. IV, p. 289. From Jefferson’s Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XVIII, 1781.]*

*Have a Safe and Enjoyable 4<sup>th</sup> of July!*



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**RAMPING UP** - The number of operating oil rigs in the United States reached 941 last week, up +43% YTD. The total has now increased for 23 consecutive weeks. The price of oil closed last Friday (6/23/17) at \$43.01 a barrel, down 20% YTD (source: Baker Hughes).

**LACK OF PLANNING** - 52% of US households with people at least age 55 had no money saved in any pre-tax defined contribution account, e.g., 401(k) or IRA (source: Government Accountability Office).

**IN THE BLACK** - From October 2008 through March 2012, the US government had 42 consecutive months of deficits. Since then (i.e., April 2012 through May 2017), the US government has generated a surplus in 20 of 62 months or 32% of the time (source: Treasury Department).