

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### LESSON 10 SESSION 01

#### **10.1 Responsibility of the present.**

Civilization is built upon the experiences of the past. Any improvements that have been accomplished are the results of human achievement. No system of living has yet been devised that relieves the individual of his personal responsibility for the improvement of human society. By personal effort each individual should pass on to posterity a civilization better than he found.

The sense of personal responsibility increases with the advancement of civilization. Not only have desires and wants multiplied, but with the advance of physical science there is also a quickened moral sentiment and spirit of philanthropic sympathy; an increasing recognition of the responsibility of each man for his fellow citizen.

#### **10.2 American Civilization Dynamic**

American civilization is expressed in "power"; the power of the individual citizen in the driving force of his initiative, adventurous spirit, self-reliance and dogged energy. To the American, life is a great adventure.

Human wants, desires, ambitions, spur mankind to achievements. Never satisfied, ever progressing, civilizations has constantly improved and, with the improvement, have come burdens and complexities which add more and more to the problems of human society.

Through equality of opportunity America gives each individual citizen an equal chance, yet his ability, intelligence, and character distinguish and classify him as progress is made.

When America was new, she called upon the racial stocks of the world to give their best. Out of these she has built a great nation.

The intelligent, though uneducated foreigner, might have continued to live in his native land without the slightest mental awakening. Once landing upon American soil, he quickly catches the spirit of his new environment, takes advantage of the free institutions, and finds opportunity for development to his fullest capacity.

In modern progress America leads the world.

The American citizen, whether native or foreign born, must recognize his obligations and assume his responsibilities not only to America but also to the entire world.

### **10.3 Individual responsibility.**

In the very nature of the organization and form of our Government, our free institutions, and the lack of all authority and order other than that created by the dictum of the people, the security and perpetuity of America rests upon the individual responsibility of her citizens.

### **10.4 Education.**

It is the duty of every citizen to obtain the best possible education. To shirk this responsibility is to be unworthy of the "blessings of liberty" and untrue to their best interest. Every new device, discovery of science, enlarged market, added production, facility of communication and transportation, carries with it a demand for an educated citizenry. Society, economics, local and foreign politics add their demands for educated leadership and participation. Greater opportunities await the educated and fewer the uneducated with each passing year. It is the responsibility of every citizen to become fully informed, for through education is found the only sure means of perpetuating and improving our social structure.

### **10.5 High standards.**

Civilization is not a circle but a pyramid. At its base is found the constantly increasing mass of humanity. Out of this common material the world has been busily engaged in building the structure of civilization.

No one is compelled to remain at the base of the pyramid that has, within him, the ability to find his way up.

From that base have come most of the great men in history. Few born in riches or high social position have ever achieved greatness.

By her system of Government America is at the mercy of those at the base of the pyramid. If through individual initiative and proper leadership they win their way toward the apex, they lift America also.

If they remain inert, ignorant, indifferent, they become the common prey of unscrupulous leaders who seek to weaken or destroy the structure of our Government.

#### 10.5.1 National character.

National character is the sum of every citizen. The Nation has a right to expect each citizen to maintain high ideals, and he has a right to expect the same of his neighbor. The resulting measure of satisfaction should spur any right-thinking individual to such attainment. The actual worth of a citizen to himself, his community, his country, regardless of any other accomplishment is based on the high quality and standard of his thinking. Obedience to higher impulses builds up self-respect without which no true success is possible.

#### 10.5.2 Community and home.

The United States has been developed by a succession of communities, independent of each other, yet closely related in their social, economic, and political interests. The character of the community is determined by the character of its homes and the character of its homes is determined by the character of the individual citizen. He is the only person upon whom responsibility for community and home can be placed.