

# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Why Government Grows

As we enter another election season, attention is increasingly focused on our politicians and their qualifications. Perhaps we're looking at the wrong people.

“Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes; but by a man of understanding and knowledge right will be prolonged” (Prov. 28:2).

When the delegates to the Continental Congress of 1776 signed the Declaration of Independence, they listed a number of complaints that, in their view, warranted the creation of a new government. One of the charges they leveled against King George was that “he has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.” They saw the growth of government bureaucracy as a curse upon the colonies, an unnecessary burden that rendered their King “unfit to be the ruler of a free people.” So they severed their ties with that government and established another, based upon their conviction that good people do not require the heavy hand of government to rule themselves.

Over two thousand years before the American colonies rebelled against their British overlords, Solomon observed a connection between the character of a

nation and its government. Moffat translates this proverb, “Many a mishap crime brings on a country; good order is maintained by honest men.” In other words, the expansion of an oppressive government is inversely proportional to the moral fiber of the population. If people cannot regulate their own passions to maintain an orderly society, someone (the government) will have to impose the regulations for them.

A modern version of this proverb is captured in the maxim, “every country has the government it deserves.” This saying (attributed to Joseph de Maistre, a French diplomat and writer, 1753-1821), turns attention away from the government to the people being governed. People who display honesty, hard work, and compassion in their lives do not need a government telling them how to run their affairs—and resent the intrusion when it does. On the other hand, people who are greedy, irresponsible, and lazy cannot maintain good order on their own, and require someone else to do it for them. They deserve the government they get.

In our own nation, the Founding Fathers created a form of government designed for a moral people, with a bare minimum of governmental oversight. But over a hundred Congresses and a civil war later, today we have the very thing our forefathers once rebelled against: “a multitude of new offices, and . . . swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.” Solomon tells us that we cannot blame our politicians for this development. The real story here is that the character of our people has changed. Over the last several generations, we have turned into a nation of self-centered sheep who are more than willing to let our government make the tough decisions for us. We deserve the government we've created.

This development is not surprising. In fact, Thomas Jefferson—the author of the Declaration of Independence—believed that “the natural progress of things is for liberty to yield, and government to gain ground” (letter to Edward Carrington, May 27, 1788). That it should be thus is a reflection on the people, not their politicians.

– David King