



# THE CRISIS

**THOMAS PAINE**  
**RETOLD BY SARA SIMPSON**

From *The Crisis*, No. 1  
Thomas Paine  
Retold by Sara Simpson

These are very difficult times. Men who only wanted to go to war when things were easy will run away from their responsibilities now, but men who continue to fight deserve the respect of every man and woman in this country. A cruel and controlling ruler is like the devil: not easy to defeat. We should be glad that it has been hard to win our freedom; the harder the conflict, the better it will feel when we win. When a person is able to get what he wants too easily, he does not appreciate it. It would be silly if something as important as freedom were easy to achieve.

Britain has a large, strong army to enforce their tyranny. Britain says they have a right to tax us as much as they want and to do whatever is necessary to get us back under their control. If this isn't slavery, I do not know what is. The idea that one man can have total control over another man is offensive; total power can only belong to God.

Looking back on the situation, I think we waited too long to declare our independence. If we had started the process eight months sooner, things would be going better right now. We have no one to blame but ourselves for how difficult it has been. Howe, the leader of the British troops, has been doing lots of damage to property but he has not managed to beat us.

I am not a very superstitious person, but I believe God will not let the British beat us. This is why. We have tried very hard to avoid war, and I think that God will help us win because we tried so hard to keep peace. Britain, on the other hand, wants to fight. The king of Britain is no better than a common murderer or thief.

Explain why Paine thinks it is a good thing that Americans have had to struggle to win their freedom from Britain.

[illegible]

Explain why Paine does not think the British will be able to beat the Americans in battle.

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I used to feel angry people who support the British. One such person who supported the British was the owner of a tavern in the town of Amboy, New Jersey. One day at the tavern, the owner had his little boy with him. The boy was about eight years old. After showing as much support for the British as he thought he could get away with without causing a fight, he finished by saying “All I want is for there to be peace right now! People in the future can fight!” What a terrible father. A good father would have said “If there is going to be a war, let it happen to me so my child can have peace.” We have a duty to fight for our freedom now so that our children can enjoy lives of peace after we are gone.

Here in America, we have chance to be happy. We are far away from the rest of the world and all its problems; the only thing we have to do with the rest of the world is trade. America will never be happy until we are free of the control of Britain. Until we separate from them, there will be war after war to fight. We must win this war with Britain.

America does not want to fight with Britain. However, if we must fight, we want to do so wisely so there is as little loss of life as possible. The skill of running an army takes time to learn. We struggled to organize our army at first. Because we were trying to avoid war, we waited too long to assemble a real and proper army. Instead, we assembled a militia of citizens to defend us. This was a mistake. However, even with our militia, we were still able to make progress. After spending a summer trying to defend ourselves, we now have a real army. We now have a well-trained army that can help us win this war.

British General Howe and his army will try to attack Philadelphia. If he sets crosses the Delaware River, we will ruin him. However, even if he succeeds, *our* cause

Explain why Paine says the tavern owner is a bad father.

Explain why Paine thinks that America will be more successful in future battles than they have been in the past.

will not be ruined. The British troops cannot possibly attack every area at once. All of the Tories (British sympathizers in America) should be sad that Howe has come into our country. I wish we could drive all of the British supporters out of our country and take their possessions and property, divide them up among the loyal Americans, and use the things we took to help the good people who have suffered because of this war. I know it sounds like I only want revenge, but I am more worried about the suffering of loyal Americans than I am about getting even with traitors.

But that is enough talk about the people who have been traitors. I want to focus on the people who have stood by this nation. I encourage the people of each state to stand together to help us. I want us to be able to tell future generations how we put aside our differences to fight a common enemy. Do not simply pray to God for us to win the war. Instead, as it says in the Bible “show your faith by your works.” God will help us if we do the work to help ourselves. It does not matter where you live, how rich or how poor you are; whatever happens to this country will affect you. If you run away and hide during this time, your children will look back and feel ashamed of you. If you stand up and fight, they will look back with pride, knowing that you did the right thing.

For me, it is very clear that we are doing the right thing. Nothing in the world could have made me support a war I thought was wrong. Killing people is wrong. However, if someone breaks into my house, destroys my property, kills or threatens to kill me or my family, and says he will do whatever it takes to control me, I have to fight back. Whether that person is another citizen or the king of Britain with an army, it is the same thing. I have a right to defend myself, my family, and my country.

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Describe Paine’s call to action in this paragraph. What does he want his fellow Americans to do as a result of reading this text?

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Explain why Paine says it is right for the Americans to have gone to war against the British.

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