

FREEDOM!

God created us to love freedom, but we need to define freedom properly. As our nation celebrates Independence Day, our minds focus on the freedom that was won at great cost of blood in the Revolutionary War. That war gained our freedom from oppression by an over-bearing king in England. The goal of freedom was clear and the route to get there was fierce and violent. But freedom was, indeed, won.

Our spiritual freedom is no different. God made us to love freedom and the joy it brings, "I tell you these things that my joy may be in you and your joy be made full," (John 15:11). Those words of Jesus come just a few chapters after He said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," (John 8:32).

There is a great parallel here: the blood-bought freedom we celebrate this week in the USA, and the blood-bought freedom Christians celebrate every day, after their redemption by His blood, "...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ," (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

The blood of the Minute Men and other patriots bought our freedom for our lifetime. The blood of Jesus bought our freedom for all eternity! As we remember the 4th of July, we also remember that our freedom has a responsibility... a call to maintain that freedom, and so we have done, particularly in two world wars. Likewise, our Christians freedom calls for a responsibility. That call is a more individual call for a response of the soul – to keep one's self unstained by the world, (James 1:27).

For a fuller understanding of the freedom God gives, consider the following:

- It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery, Galatians 5:1
- For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another, Galatians 5:13
- Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God, 1 Peter 2:1

You will notice that each of these passages on freedom also calls for a mature, Christian response to that freedom.

Lastly, be very careful... there are evil men, imposters who spew out lies to call people to a false freedom, which is actually slavery to sin. That is obvious today as evil and sensual men falsely define sexual pervasion as freedom. Paul reminds us in Romans 6:15-19, that we are slaves of whom we obey, either God or Satan! In 2 Peter 2:18-19, Peter describes how evil men work:

For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

Freedom is never found in immoral enslavement. Freedom can never be enjoyed without the personal response of an individual soul in obedience to God. Then, and only then, can any Christian enjoy the joy Jesus gives (John 15:11) and the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7).

(Further study: Romans 8:21; 1 Peter 2:16)

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