

## **A High Price to Pay**

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Most of us have heard the expression, “Freedom is not free.” It conveys the idea that the cost of the freedoms we enjoy has been paid by someone. There is a high price for freedom and someone has ensured that the debt has been paid. This weekend, we celebrate the independence of our nation from England, as well as the freedoms we enjoy. This is a good time to reflect upon the price of our freedom.

The freedoms we enjoy as Americans – religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and public assembly, as well as many others – have been paid time and again by citizens of our nation. The cost has been paid in the blood of more men and women than can be imagined by most of us. The places of payment have been on battlefields all around the world. But they are not the only ones who have borne the cost of our liberty.

The cost has also been felt by the families of those same patriots. When one member of the family pays a bill, the remainder of the family feels it as well. We all enjoy the benefit of the electricity, but we all know that when the bill is paid, those funds are not available to be enjoyed somewhere else. We all pay the price, just as we all enjoy the benefits. But in the end, we know that the benefits we enjoy are far greater than the price that it paid.

From time to time, I have occasion to visit cemeteries. When I do, I tend to wander around and notice the headstones and grave markers, especially paying attention to those that indicate the person identified is a veteran of the military. I pay attention to the dates that show when the person died. Sometimes, it is easy to surmise that the person died in battle. Others carried their wounds with them for years, passing on later in life. Far more never served in combat, but served in important roles, nonetheless. Many of them carried the memories of friends or relatives who did not live to enjoy the freedoms for which they sacrificed their lives.

As a Christian, I believe I have been given another freedom, as well. I have been freed from the penalty that must be paid for my sin. The Bible teaches that we are all sinners and the cost of our sin is death. But it also teaches that God loves us so much that He did not want us to pay such a high price. In order that we would be free from this burden, He arranged for this price to be paid, once for all. Jesus was the only one who was able to pay this penalty for all people. He willingly gave his life so that we would not have to. In short, it was a high price to be paid and he willingly paid it on our behalf.

As Americans, we should be thoughtful of those who have so willingly and freely paid the price for the liberties that are ours. As we celebrate Independence Day, we should pause to give thanks to God that we have a national heritage of men and women who did not hesitate to stand and serve bravely to ensure that we would continue to enjoy our freedoms for generations to come.

Enjoy your Independence Day. Enjoy your Spiritual Independence, as well. It was bought at a very high price.

Semper Fi in the Lord and I hope to see you in church on Sunday.