

***Fanning it into Flame***  
**Sunday, July 04, 2010**  
**The True Nature of Freedom**

Today is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a day when we celebrate our independence and freedom as a nation. We cannot help but make the parallel to the freedom we have in Christ. Both of these freedoms did not come cheaply. There was and is a price to pay. Thomas Jefferson was only 33 years old when he penned the Declaration of Independence which begins with: ***We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*** When he wrote this he knew, along with all the signers, that they were laying their lives on the line. They would be looked upon as traitors to England and have a sentence of death on them. However, they believed in their cause and were ready to pay the price for their convictions.

When the Apostle Paul became a Christian he was persecuted for his faith, but would not be dissuaded from proclaiming the Good News. He declared in **Galatians 5:1** ***It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*** The yoke of slavery he was speaking of was the bondage that comes from thinking that we become acceptable to God by keeping the law. The true Gospel proclaims that we become a new creation in Christ and are accepted by God through what Christ has done for us alone. Paul taught that when we were set free by Christ our lives would demonstrate that fact through what we did as a result of this freedom.

He exhorted the believers in verse 13: ***You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*** Why would Paul address this issue? It's because we can get so caught up in our own freedom that we lose sight of the real nature of it. The freedom we have **is** for us, just not us in a vacuum. The "us" is all of us. We are a family. When we are led by the Spirit of God we have his desires in mind and his desire is that we would all love one another and him. We are to ***"Keep in step with the Holy Spirit."*** Then we will be walking in the ultimate plan of God.

God wants to give you the desires of your heart. He just wants your desires to be those that will help you fulfill your divine destiny and purpose and advance his kingdom. We can't escape the fact that we were created by him and for him. It's who we are. Anything outside of that perspective is a distortion of reality. God must be at the center of our thinking, the object of our desire, the focus of our worship, and the reason for our being. We can get so caught up with our work-a-day world that we lose sight of what really matters.

Let today be a day when we thank God for what he has done for us and renew our commitment to love and serve him. Let's renew our dedication and glorify him through what we say and do. The true nature of freedom is living the life Jesus died to give us; a personal, enjoyable, glorious, and exciting faith-filled, hope driven, and love directed adventure. Ask yourself the introspective questions: *Am I living my life for myself alone or am I allowing the Holy Spirit to direct my steps? Am I considerate of those around me? Am I being faithful to the Lord in my daily activities as well as my thought life? Am I seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness? Am I living in the freedom he purchased for me or am I using that freedom for my own gain?* May the Lord bless each of us to see him more clearly and what he has in store for us!