



Freedom Is Not Free

Summertime Fireworks!
It's hamburgers and hot dog time.
Taking the family to the beach or barbecuing in the back yard?
Watching the fireworks?
Dusting the flag off and hanging it out front?

Ah! Now, there's something to celebrate...

Our Flag!



**Our American flag flies over this great nation.
It reminds us that our United States home is a
home of "THE FREE AND THE BRAVE".**

1. **Free to be of whatever political persuasion we choose**
2. **Free to speak up about all things we "don't like" or "don't agree with"**
3. **Free to love and marry who we choose**
4. **Free to worship how we choose**
5. **Free to be what we want to be - with jobs and careers of our choice**
6. **Free to shout, to be angry, to criticize, to ridicule**
7. **Free to build; free to tear down**

**Freedom abounds in America.
I think we take it all for granted.**

There are Americans who don't take freedom for granted. They are our soldiers. We must remember: they are the ones who've fought to defend

our country from those who would TAKE AWAY our freedoms.

As we celebrate the 4th of July, I want to share this poem.

It reminds me that...

SOMEONE PAID A PRICE FOR ME TO LIVE AS I CHOOSE.

"FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"

*I watched the flag pass by one day.
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it.
And then he stood at ease.*

*I looked at Him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
With hair cut square and eyes alert.
He'd stand out in any crowd.*

*I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years.
How many died on foreign soil...
How many mothers' tears?*

*How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom is not free.*

*I heard the sound of taps one night,
When everything was still,
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.*

*I wondered just how many times
That Taps had meant 'Amen,'
When a flag had draped the coffin
Of a brother, son, or friend.*

*I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.*

*I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea...
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
No, freedom is not free.*



IS THERE A LESSON? YES. I THINK THERE ARE FIVE:

1. With our hearts, we need to be truly grateful for our freedom. Be aware that we have daily choices because we are "free" and have an "attitude of gratitude".
2. We must always remember that INDIVIDUAL men and women have (and do) sacrificed for us. Find someone in your company, your neighborhood, or your church that has sacrificed for our country. Just say, "Thanks..."
3. We need to wear "reverence" when referring to: (1) our soldiers; (2) our flag; (3) our country. Let it show! Be an influence to those around you. It's cool; it's hip; it's respectful. When others have paid such a high price; then can't we, at the very least, show a simple "reverence"?
4. We need to do OUR part. A bragging soldier, full of bluster and bravado, is much more rare than the soldier that humbly says, "*I was just doing my job.*" Follow the soldier's lead by doing OUR jobs to love and protect our nation. FIND ways to make a difference.
5. TRULY ENJOY the 4th of July Celebration. That's WHY the price was paid!

*Oh yes, and by the way, I'm married to a United States Marine!
He paid a price; he has a Purple Heart; he never discusses it.
He's the "I-just-did-my-job" kind of warrior.
I'm grateful to be married to him and am humbled by his sacrifice.*

Have a wonderful 4th of July!