



Independence Day



Independence Day was my favorite holiday during my youth in Nebraska. Summers were intensely hot, humid, green, and completely unscheduled. The children of our neighborhood spent most of our time at the local community swimming pool, thrashing endlessly in the water. A few would spend days fishing in the shade creekside, watching a bobber and hoping for a tug. When July arrived, so did firecracker stands, and the sound of popping and sizzling fireworks dominated the neighborhood. We were patriotic parade attendees (and participants) and unified in a simple celebration of our nation. For me the fourth of July has always been a day of community, a time to celebrate unity.

I am so thankful for the country in which I live and celebrate who we are as a people. We may often disagree on the details, but we are truly proud of our nation and thankful for our citizenship. If you've ever watched Independence Day fireworks from center field at Dodger stadium, you've seen an incredibly diverse array of people singing and celebrating in a moment of intense unity.

I pray each of us have those moments this week, as we give time to family and community. Our connections to each other, the beliefs and ideals that we share, give purpose to our lives. As Christians, we are a community united through Christ himself, and are bound to a family that extends beyond our borders. I pray that as you celebrate family and community this week, you celebrate your spiritual family and the source of that unity as well.

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ,
if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any
tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being
like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.
Philippians 2:1-2 (NIV)*

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