

6 July 2018

### **“The Fourth of July”**

This week was the Fourth of July. As originally conceived, Independence Day was a day of national celebration to remember the signing of the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776. We as a nation have also traditionally celebrated the day to recall our memory of the principles for which someone somewhere founded us as the United States of America. I say this because we are at least as much of an ideal as we are a nation.

The Fourth of July has also become a much-needed oasis in the midst of a long hot and unusually dry stretch of calendar (especially this year) between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Fourth is frequently a day for picnics, family reunions, and fire-works (depending on burn bans).

It is usually one of the hotter days of the year and many of our friends and relatives “let slip,” yet again, some of their well-worn stories about how they did this or that and, by the way, much better than anyone else! We call this bragging or boasting. It seems when people get together, they love to top each other’s stories. We all know those who tell stories that sound like bragging and boasting. Some of us are prone to the activity ourselves! Time for confession: I am the worst offender of all!

But at least genetics wired this character flaw into me. As a child I recall hearing some of the whoppers my Grandpa, who ironically was born on 4 July 1901, used to pull out. My Grandmother would be beside herself, thinking that young and impressionable grandchildren might actually believe anything he might say. One of my cousins said he was surprised to learn that our grandfather was actually born on Independence Day—he had thought it was part of “his routine” for all those years.

This week as we celebrate the 4th of July, I pray for all of you that we might, as Paul suggests in his epistle “love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10). Perhaps we can all leave the bragging for another day.

Come—Worship  
Stay—Learn  
Go—Serve!