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I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments. Psalm 119:45. NLT.As we celebrate our nation's freedom this week, it is always good to remember what it cost our founding fathers to form our nation. So many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence suffered for their actions. The British captured five of the signers, and tortured them before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the revolutionary army, another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the revolutionary war. ([www.michaelwsmith.com](http://www.michaelwsmith.com)) It was personally costly for these brave men, and we are still reaping the benefits of their sacrifice today.But, unfortunately, most of us don't even think about that cost. Complaints, criticism and frustrations abound about how things are not right, but rarely do we hear people talking about the freedoms we have. Each of these freedoms came with a high price tag. The freedom of speech, the freedom of assembly and worship, the freedom of the press are all freedoms our founding fathers fought for. Because most of us have not lived in places where these freedoms are not experienced, we don't comprehend how good we do have it. I think it is often the same with the freedom that was purchased by Christ. We are often forgetful about the actual price it cost Him for our freedom. Then we settle for living less than He intends. There are so many ways we can get entangled. We move from grace to living under the law. We forget about cultivating the fruit of the Spirit, and settle for the works of the flesh. One way we can lose our freedom is living with unforgiveness. Our Life Group has been watching a video series by Bruce and Toni Hebel, called "Forgiving Forward". This teaching really brings it home that God's Word is quite adamant that we need to walk in forgiveness, no matter what. It is not an option. As I have waited on the Lord, it's been surprising the things the Holy Spirit brings up that I need to take the time to forgive--things in the past that I thought were long buried and done with. But as I partner with Him, I find my heart freer and at an even greater peace. This is a reminder to keep your heart clear as the Holy Spirit leads. Do not fall for the lie or deception that it doesn't make a difference, because it does. Read Matthew 18: 21-35. Let God's Word touch your heart.Jesus poured His life out for us. He endured so much to purchase our freedom, and for that I am so grateful. We can walk with Him with a free heart, and that is priceless. The freedom forgiveness brings to you and your relationships is priceless. Don't justify it, just do it. Ask Him for His help, He is really good at helping people forgive!Father, I am so grateful we have your forgiveness. Thank you we can walk in that freedom and help pass that on to others. Our ability to forgive comes from the fact we are already forgiven. Teach us how to forgive from our heart like you have asked us to. We trust you to heal our hurts, and release us into Your freedom, In Jesus Name, amen. |

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