



Memorial Day - Honoring Our Fallen Heroes and Our God-Given Freedoms They Fought For

By Karen Sue Nyquist

1. **Happy Memorial Day!** Memorial Day is the unofficial start of summer. We Americans have picnics, enjoy sports, and travel to visit friends and family. Hopefully, we also remember the main purpose for having Memorial Day.

2. **What is Memorial Day for?** - It is the day Americans remember and honor our veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice during wartime. They experienced the horrors of war that the rest of us non-military Americans cannot even imagine. No matter what political persuasion we are, from pacifists to hawks, they still deserve our respect and honor. So, some of us attend ceremonies at cemeteries, honoring our fallen heroes, and visiting the graves of loved ones.

"May we never forget that freedom isn't free." - Unknown

3. **War is hell!** - There is no denying it. Horrible things happen in war. Very strong responses must be done to stop aggression and bring a war to an end. Wars are often started because of oppressive, totalitarian, tyrannical, and/or expansionistic actions are taken by aggressors. In response, their victims may choose to rise up and fight back. Others may see the danger and step in to help those being attacked. Things get really messy and ugly. Both sides take actions that they may regret. Many precious American veterans have been in these situations. Many have died fighting in those wars, but their sacrifices have resulted in liberating millions of people, stopping the spread of tyranny and aggression, and preserving our God-given freedoms. Let's look at four examples. **"Home of the free because of the brave." - Unknown**

4. **The 1st and 2nd Barbary Wars** - From the time of President Washington to President Jefferson, the pirates from the Barbary States of northern Africa were attacking European coastal towns and American and European ships. They were pillaging, killing, kidnapping, selling, and enslaving them. "The result is that between 1530 and 1780 there were almost certainly 1 million and quite possibly as many as 1.25 million white, European Christians enslaved by the Muslims of the Barbary Coast." (1) <https://history.osu.edu/publications/christian-slaves-muslim-masters>. Nations were paying high tribute to the pirates to stop these atrocities. Fed up, Jefferson sent our navy and marines, who beat them in war, and the aggression ceased. Thank God for our veterans who fought and died in both of these little known wars.

"The secret of happiness is freedom, the secret of freedom is courage." - Carrie Jones

5. **The American Civil War** - During the Civil War, 360,222 American Union soldiers died fighting to preserve the union and to free the enslaved Americans who were living in the 15 "slave states." Because of their sacrifices, slavery was outlawed and these nearly 4 million people were liberated. Thank God for our veterans who fought and died, they deserve to be remembered and honored.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal. . . ." - Declaration of Independence

6. **World War II** - During WWII, 416,800 of our veterans died as they fought and liberated millions of people from these three aggressive leaders:

a) **Imperialist Hirohito** - attacked and invaded China, Wake Island, Hong Kong, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, Korea, Thailand, Indonesians, killing 10 million people. He also bombed our Pearl Harbor, bringing us into the war.

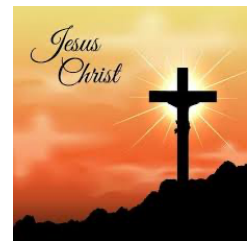
b) **Nazi Hitler** - attacked and invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Russia. He killed 6 million Jews and 5 million others in the Holocaust and declared war on the USA 4 days after Pearl Harbor.

c) **Fascist Mussolini** - attacked and invaded Ethiopia, Greece, Mandatory Palestine, Egypt, Somaliland, Albania, Croatia, Corsica, Tunisia, Yugoslavia, and Montenegro, killing 430 thousand. He declared war on the USA the same day that Hitler did.

Thank God for victory! With deep gratitude, we thank our veterans, those living and those who lost their lives, and the gold star families who lost their loved ones. **"And I'm proud to be an American Where at least I know I'm free, And I won't forget the men who died Who gave that right to me" - Lee Greenwood**

7. **If war so horrible, why do humans keep starting them? God explains it's because of the sins in the human heart.** a) "Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because **you want your own way**, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don't have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn't yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it" (James 4:1-2 Message Bible). Wars start because of **greed**, being jealous of what other people or nations have. **"Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).**





b) "He (God) delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me; For they were too strong for me ... For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose against me" (2 Samuel 22:18, 41). Wars start because of **hatred**. God sends His angels to help us and our soldiers (Psalm 34:7).

"America without her soldiers would be like God without His angels." - Claudia Pemberton

8. **But didn't God say that we cannot kill?** - No, the 10 Commandments say, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Killing may be accidental, in self-defense, or for protecting others, but killing with malice is murder and is against God's laws.

9. **Sometimes, we have to fight a war. - a)** "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:... A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8). Because of aggressors, we have to defend ourselves and fight back.

b) "Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy; Free them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalms 82:3-4). We should defend others.

10. **Does that mean we will be having wars forever?** No, Jesus has a way to remove from our hearts the sins that cause wars. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ... Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin ... Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:3, 32, 34, 36). Jesus is the Son of God. When we receive Him as our Lord and Savior, and we confess and repent of our sins, He can start changing our hearts. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Jesus wants to give us freedom from the oppression and slavery of sin. Because His Spirit comes inside of us "we all ... are being transformed into the same image (as Him) from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 3:18).

11. **We need to follow Jesus' words and example by loving others.** Jesus said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (John 5:44). Do you see how multitudes following Jesus can reduce the number of wars?

12. **Does God say that there will be a time of no more war?** - **Yes!** They are increasing now for a while because Satan is tempting people, who are still slaves to sin, to rise up with greed and hatred, to war against each other. God says He will have an angel throw Satan into his prison for 1,000 years (Revelations 20:1-8). God promises through Isaiah that, "He (God) shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; **Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore**" (Isaiah 2:4). What a wonderful promise!

13. **Meanwhile, God has provided His Son, Jesus, to pay for our sins.** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Jesus willingly died to save us from a life of sin and to give us life in heaven. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life (die) for his friends" (John 15:13). Many of our veterans died fighting for America's freedom and are our heroes. Jesus died fighting for freedom from sin for the whole world and is a hero to all nations!

"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." - Joseph Campbell

14. **Do you want Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?** - Suggested Prayer: "Jesus, please forgive and cleanse me from my sins. I believe You are God's Son and that You died for my sins. I repent from trying to live my life my way. I want to follow You and become more like You. Now, I open my heart, confess You as my Lord and Savior, and receive Your Spirit. I want a closer relationship with God. AMEN!" Name _____ Date _____

To steadily improve your relationship with God, spend time with Him, pray, and read the Bible. Daily, ask Him to become involved in your life and request His advice, direction, even correction. Obey Him when He reveals His will to you. Spend time with others who love God too. Go to a good church where you feel God's presence, they preach the Bible, and where you can get baptized in water and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

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"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction...It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." - Ronald Reagan

**Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the Press,
and Freedom of Assembly**

