

*Written by Carrie Lowrance & Veronica Olson Neffinger*

MEMORIAL DAY GUIDE

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# 5 Christian Heroes to Remember and 8 Ways Christians Can Honor Memorial Day



Remembering the fallen with  
faith, gratitude, and purpose.

**BONUS**  
**Guided Prayer**  
**Journal**  
**Inside!**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 02

---

5 Christian Heroes 03

---

7 Ways to Honor those who Served 11

---

Prayer Journal + Notes 17

---

About the Authors 23

---

About Us 24

---



# INTRODUCTION



Memorial Day is a profound reminder of the sacrifices made by countless individuals for our freedoms through their service. This day is primarily about honoring those who have fallen, but also taps into deeper realms of faith and spirituality.

This day reminds believers to consider entwining faith with national identity. Christian doctrine highlights the importance of sacrifice, selflessness, and loving one's neighbor, all attributes of those who have served and are serving in the military.

Memorial Day is also a day to honor the families of these veterans who are in our communities. There are so many ways to give back even just a little bit of what these veterans have sacrificed for us. We thank the Lord for our vets and their families and hope that they will feel honored, appreciated, and loved this Memorial Day.

# 5 CHRISTIAN HEROES TO HONOR ON MEMORIAL DAY





# DESMOND DOSS:

## THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR WHO SAVED LIVES

Desmond Doss joined the U.S. Army in 1942, turning down a deferment despite working at the Newport News Naval shipyard when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He felt compelled to serve—willing to risk his life, but not to take one.

As a devout Christian and conscientious objector, Doss believed he could serve as a medic without carrying a weapon. Instead, he was assigned to an infantry rifle company. Refusing to carry a firearm made him a target of ridicule and resentment. Fellow soldiers saw him as a misfit; one even threatened his life in battle.

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Commanding officers tried everything to push him out—scolding, intimidation, assigning difficult tasks, declaring him mentally unfit, and even attempting a court-martial. But Doss stood firm, convinced he must serve both God and country—in that order.



## Desmond Doss Continued...

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Raised with a deep reverence for the Bible and the Ten Commandments, Doss made a personal vow as a child never to take a life after seeing a picture of Cain and Abel.



In the Army, he requested Saturdays off for church, frustrating his superiors and peers, who mocked and ostracized him—until they saw his dedication to caring for others. Whether treating blisters, helping fallen comrades, or applying the Golden Rule on the battlefield, Desmond proved invaluable.

In 1945, during the battle for Okinawa, Doss's unit attempted to capture Hacksaw Ridge, a strategic cliff fiercely defended by Japanese forces. A brutal counterattack forced a retreat—but Doss stayed behind, saving 75 wounded men under relentless fire. Days later, a grenade severely wounded him. Despite shrapnel injuries and a sniper's bullet shattering his arm, he treated himself and urged medics to help another soldier before him.

For his bravery, Desmond Doss received the Medal of Honor, along with a Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Good Conduct Medal. His life and heroism are depicted in the film Hacksaw Ridge.

# CHAPLAIN EMIL KAPAUN: COURAGE UNDER FIRE AND SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Born in 1916, Emil Kapaun was raised on a Kansas farm. His parents were of German-Bohemian ancestry. He had one sibling, his brother Eugene. Emil was a brilliant boy and learned how to repair farm implements. This skill would serve him well later in life when he became a prisoner of war.

In 1936, he finished his studies of classics and philosophy at Conception College. He started attending Kendrick Seminary and became a priest in 1940. Between 1943 and 1944, he was a chaplain at an Army Air Base in Herington, Kansas. He then joined the Army Chaplain Corps in 1944. He spent a brief time in Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

After that, he served the rest of World War II in the Burma and India Theater. Then in 1946, they promoted him to captain. Later that year, he left the Army and continued to advance his education.



## Chaplain Emil Kapaun Continued...

In 1948, he joined the Army Chaplain Corps again. He became mobile to support the Korean War and served as a chaplain in Japan and Korea before being taken prisoner.

During the fight, he moved quickly under enemy fire to rescue men from no-man's land outside the battle perimeter. He negotiated for a soldier's safety, physically stopped an execution, and rejected opportunities to escape, choosing to stay and care for the wounded. In August 1950, he received the Bronze Star.

In November 1950, the North Korean Army and its allies captured him, but he escaped after they were shot and killed. His captors recaptured him when he remained with the wounded at a POW camp.

While in the prison camp, he tended the sick, looked for food, and built fires despite the guards' warnings. The prisoners credited him for saving their lives before he died from his wounds and maltreatment.

Besides other honors, Kapaun received the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, and the Bronze Star Medal. The Roman Catholic Church also called him "Servant of God." This is the second of four stages to becoming a saint.





## MAJOR DICK WINTERS:

### A LEADER COMMITTED TO ETHICAL SERVICE

Richard was born in 1918 in New Holland, Pennsylvania, and had a very normal childhood. He attended college for a Bachelor of Science in economics and enrolled in the United States Army the following summer. Richard didn't have any interest in going to war, but he did so to live out the mandatory 12 months he signed up for. He volunteered for paratrooper training, and the Army assigned him to Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Georgia.

In 1941, President Roosevelt signed the Service Extension Act into law, mandating 30 months of service for those drafted. Since Richard volunteered, his contract still fell under the 12-month term.

When the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entered the war, everything changed. After attending Army Cadet School, the Army assigned him to the 101st Airborne Division. His promotion to Second Lieutenant followed quickly. He volunteered for paratrooper training, and the Army assigned him to Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Georgia.

A year later, he and his men deployed to England to prepare for the Battle of Normandy. They arrived in Normandy and his men informed him that the German artillery had shot down the headquarters of Easy Company. That night he led his men to assault the Nazis, specifically aiming at exits on Utah Beach. His superiors promoted him to captain from there.

Winters and his men parachuted into Son, Holland, where they assaulted the Nazi soldiers and then they moved on to Bastogne, Belgium, for the Battle of the Bulge. The Nazis launched a counterattack and Winters held ground until General Patton's Third Army arrived.

He received a promotion eight days after Hitler died. They tasked him and his men with capturing Hitler's alpine retreat. His men finished their journey on May 5th, with Nazi Germany surrendering two days later. Winters stayed in Europe, taking personal acceptance of the surrender of German soldiers.

From there, Winters headed to France and, just after marrying, received orders to deploy again. He refused and tried being a planning and training officer before resigning.

# MOTHER TERESA:

## SERVING HUMANITY IN TIMES OF WAR AND PEACE

Mother Teresa was an Albanian-Indian Catholic nun and founded the Missions of Charity. Her real name was Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu.

The Missions of Charity comprised a congregation committed to helping the poor and destitute in India. Mother Teresa devoted her life to helping those in need and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. The Catholic Church canonized her in September 2016.



# CAPTAIN WILLIAM "BILLY" GRAHAM:

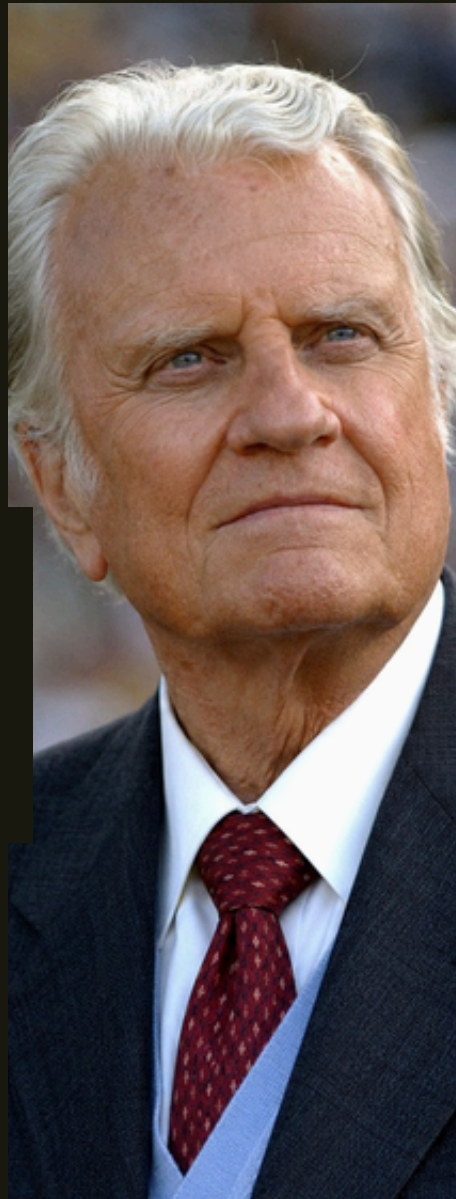
## THE EVANGELIST WHO SERVED

William "Billy" Graham is one of the most prominent evangelists of our time. He preached to people at his Crusades, simulcasts, and evangelistic rallies.

He had regular prime-time broadcasts and provided spiritual counsel to 12 U.S. presidents, including Harry S. Truman and Barack Obama.

He also wrote several books, received various awards and honors, and founded Samaritan's Purse.

This holiday serves as an intersection of memory, spirituality, and community. We should pause and reflect on those who have sacrificed, Christian and non-Christian, with our faith to guide our remembrance.



# 7 WAYS TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVED

There are so many ways to give back even just a little bit of what these veterans have sacrificed for us, and below are just a few ideas to get you started. We thank the Lord for our vets and their families and hope that they will feel honored, appreciated, and loved this Memorial Day.



## 1. VISIT VETS IN A NURSING HOME

Many veterans, especially from World War II and the Vietnam War, are elderly, and many are in nursing homes. Some also don't have family nearby and would surely love visitors, especially on a day that is so important.

Find a veterans nursing home in your state and stop by to bring some joy to someone's day and to thank them for their service.

You may end up making a friend and hearing some fascinating stories.

## 2. VISIT A NATIONAL CEMETERY

There is at least one national cemetery in every state, as well as in Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico.

What more appropriate time to visit one of these places than on Memorial Day?

And if you have kids, what a great opportunity to teach them about history; and about the truth that freedom is never free. Christian author Eric Metaxas also suggests that you could "decorate graves. Or simply walk the grounds quietly and pray."

### 3. DONATE TO A MILITARY ORGANIZATION

There are [so many great organizations](#) that seek to help those in the military as well as their families.

Why not sit down as a family and budget some money this Memorial Day and choose an organization that you prayerfully invest in?

Whether it's spiritual or physical needs of active military or veterans that you decide to support, this is a great way to express your gratefulness to those who have served—or are serving—our country.

### 4. LEARN ABOUT THE HISTORY OF MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is often viewed as the herald of summer. People use the extra day off to go on vacation or to plan get-togethers and cookouts.

While none of these things are wrong, Memorial Day has a richer history.

Its observance began after the Civil War, but it wasn't designated as a national holiday till 1971. To read more click [here](#).

## 5. ATTEND A MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE

Memorial Day services are held across the country and you can probably find one near you. These services often include prayer, singing, and time to honor those who have served and given their lives.

Even better, invite your whole family and friends with you to the service. Metaxas also notes that many of these services are hosted by veterans, which may even give you a chance to meet some of them and thank them in person.



## 6. TEACH YOUR KIDS ABOUT MEMORIAL DAY

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."

Take the opportunity this Memorial Day to teach your kids—or someone else's—about this important holiday and its history.

Memorial Day is important to America's heritage and its legacy, but if we don't teach children about it, the freedoms we hold dear are that much closer to slipping away.

As Ronald Reagan once famously said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream.

## 7. OBSERVE THE NATIONAL MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

On Memorial Day at 3:00 p.m., local time, Americans are asked to take a moment and remember those who sacrificed for our nation and our freedoms. As Metaxas [notes](#), "Since 2000, Americans have been asked to 'voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a Moment of Remembrance and respect, pausing from whatever they are doing for a moment of silence or listening to Taps.'" This is the perfect time to reflect, say a brief [prayer](#), or hug a veteran in your life. How will you observe this moment?

MEMORIAL  
DAY

# Prayer *Journal*

INCLUDES 5-DAYS OF PRAYER PROMPTS TO  
PRAY FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

# Memorial Day Prayer & Reflection Log

Date

Day

*LET'S PRAY FOR VETERANS TO EXPERIENCE HEALING FROM PHYSICAL INJURIES, PTSD, AND THE INVISIBLE SCARS OF MILITARY SERVICE. ASK GOD TO RESTORE THEIR MINDS, BODIES, AND SPIRITS.*

Focus of Prayer / Reflection

Scripture / Quote (Optional)

Prayer or Thoughts

Notes

# Memorial Day Prayer & Reflection Log

Date

Day

*LET'S PRAY FOR VETERANS ADJUSTING TO CIVILIAN LIFE, FINDING PURPOSE, EMPLOYMENT, AND STABILITY. ASK GOD TO GUIDE THEIR STEPS AND PROVIDE PEACE IN EVERY TRANSITION.*

Focus of Prayer / Reflection

Scripture / Quote (Optional)

Prayer or Thoughts

Notes

# Memorial Day Prayer & Reflection Log

Date

Day

*LET'S PRAY THAT VETERANS WOULD FEEL  
CONNECTED, SUPPORTED, AND NEVER ALONE. ASK  
GOD TO SURROUND THEM WITH LOVING  
RELATIONSHIPS AND A STRONG COMMUNITY.*

Focus of Prayer / Reflection

Scripture / Quote (Optional)

Prayer or Thoughts

Notes

# Memorial Day Prayer & Reflection Log

Date

Day

*LET'S PRAY FOR PEACE TO GUARD THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS, ESPECIALLY THOSE BATTLING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, OR GUILT. ASK THAT GOD'S COMFORT WOULD CALM THEIR INNER BATTLES.*

Focus of Prayer / Reflection

Scripture / Quote (Optional)

Prayer or Thoughts

Notes

# Memorial Day Prayer & Reflection Log

Date

Day

*LET'S PRAY FOR VETERANS TO EITHER FIND OR RENEW A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. ASK THAT THEY EXPERIENCE HIS GRACE, PURPOSE, AND PRESENCE IN EVERY SEASON OF LIFE.*

Focus of Prayer / Reflection

Scripture / Quote (Optional)

Prayer or Thoughts

Notes

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# About the Authors

## *Carrie Lowrance*

**Carrie Lowrance** is a freelance writer and author. She has had her work featured on Crosswalk, iBelieve, Huffington Post, and the Penny Hoarder. She is also the author of three children's books, three clean romance books, one romance novella, three books of poetry, and one non-fiction book. When she's not writing, she enjoys cooking and baking, reading, and hanging out with her husband, and sweet cat, Cupcake. You can find out more about Carrie and her writing at [www.carrielowrance.com](http://www.carrielowrance.com).

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