



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

You may not read this until Tuesday; by then, your Memorial Day holiday will have passed. If you went to church yesterday, you may have experienced a patriotic service in which veterans of military service - and, perchance, currently serving military personnel - were asked to stand and receive a warm affirmation from the audience/congregation. *That's good, anytime; it's always deserved, and often under-expressed.*

But, technically, Memorial Day isn't about the *living*; it was established to honor the *fallen*. Men and women who died while in service to our country were the focus when Decoration Day was established in May, 1868 to honor soldiers who died in the American Civil War. After World War I, it was expanded to include American casualties of any war or military action. The emphasis was on those who paid the highest price, to defend our nation and its values.

Good thing Memorial Day was established 140 years ago; the current generation might not regard war dead as valiant. In the movie *Fight Club*, character Tyler Darden put it this way: *"We're the middle children of history... no purpose or place. We have no Great War, no Great Depression. Our great war is a spiritual war. Our great depression is our lives..."* The last decade saw patriotic young



people enlisting for military service, but far more arose during that same time to oppose any offshore military actions. One CNN interview of "man on the street" college students asked if they would be willing to fight for their country. One representative response: *"Dude, there is nothing worth dying for."* That raises a haunting - and, defining - question: *if there is nothing worth dying for, then what is worth living for?*

The halls of the New Testament have a wing committed to the memorials of men and women who died in service to the Kingdom. The address of that hallowed space is Hebrews 11, and its alcoves tell the stories of people who answered the enlistment call of God to fight to the death the battles for which they were alive. In the exhibit, this plaque captures the essence of their stories: *"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things*

*promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them... These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised..." (Hebrews 11:13-16, 39).*

Veterans Day (November 11th) honors the living. Memorial Day honors the fallen. I wonder: if God uses the metaphor of warfare to describe our participation in the Divine opposition to the efforts of the Evil One, am I in *active duty*? or *AWOL*? What is your current status? He offers no retirement provisions; that is no option. We're either *fighting Evil*... or, we've *surrendered*.

May we serve in a way that qualifies us - someday - for His commendation: *"Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God..."*

*Bob Shank*

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