



Memorial Day is a sacred day.

In all the years I've celebrated Memorial Day with my friends, but especially with my family, I've always reflected on the sacrifices of those who've paid the ultimate sacrifice through the lens of my immigrant family's liberation from Nazi occupation in the Netherlands. My grandparents and great-grandparents were blessed by American troops freeing them from the threat of execution for hiding Jewish families in their dairy barns and the prolonged suffering of torture to the extended family for doing so. Growing up, my family would always be sure to give thanks for the sacrifice the Americans made for our freedom. In my adult years, I've come to see Memorial Day as a day to pray for and honor the fallen that, in many ways, freed people from atrocities. I see those we grieve and pray for as liberators of people, foreign and domestic – America's protectors of freedom who were willing to give their freedom for ours.

I think about the dreams and aspirations of those lost in service for the greater good. I think about the dreams of young men and women – getting married, having children, and great-grandchildren, the joys of experiencing nature, the arts, and many other freedoms we enjoy every day – becoming a doctor, a lawyer, a mechanic, a dairy farmer, all stand still in time, never to be realized. And now, because of the sacrifice of those brave and selfless souls, we are free to pursue our dreams in a better world. I am reminded of Christ's sacrifice, who gave His life so that his followers would be liberated from death and the grave so that we might be lifted up in glory, one day, to be among the unfathomable glory of our Savior and Lord.

"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

This Memorial Day, as we gather with friends and family around the BBQ, at the beach, in the pool, or wherever you are celebrating, may we also take a moment to commemorate and remember the sacrifice of our fallen heroes. I encourage everyone to speak with family and friends about what Memorial Day is to you – your unique story – that has been afforded to you by men and women who were willing to die so that we might live in freedom. Let's also give thanks to our Lord and Savior that we can commit our lives to a Christian, Bible-based University without fear or ramification.

My prayer for all of America is that we find common ground to give thanks and deeply consider what the world might look like had these selfless souls not abandoned their dreams, hopes, loves, and families by giving their lives so that we may live ours. Soli Deo Gloria.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it, and then hand it to them with the well-fought lessons of how they, in their lifetime, must do the same. And if you and I don't do this, then you and I may well spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it once was like in America when men were free." Ronald Reagan, 1961

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