

The Inspiration of our Heroes

It is easy to go through our day-to-day life focused on our own agenda. We have careers to build, families to feed and a long to-do list. We have a wish list of things we'd like to acquire and do. We have so much that we can get full of ourselves, but we continually seek more. We drive down the street in our late model car to shop at the well-stocked grocery store or clothing store. We have the ability to say what is on our mind without political consequences because freedom of speech is a right for all who live in this country. Living in the USA is like winning the lottery.

How did we get so lucky to live in a free country that allows us to prosper if we work hard? Part of the answer is the vision of the Founding Fathers who sought to build a culture of freedom – a freedom we celebrate this week. Another part of the answer is the sacrifice of people who put their lives on the line to defend our way of life in the world. They are the true heroes of this country. Their heroism is not limited to just this country but other parts of the world that desire the freedoms we enjoy.



On June 11th one of those heroes was transferred from a celebrated WWII veteran to God's eternal army. William H. "Doc" Long was an infantryman in World War II under General George S. Patton. Long was severely wounded in a German ambush in Ancerville, France. He spent two years recovering from his wounds but never regained the use of his right arm. Nevertheless, he was always positive and inspirational about his service to his country. Long spent the rest of his life supporting his family with a successful business, but more importantly, motivating others about the importance of the cause of freedom. He would frequently say, "Freedom Is Not Free." God gave him an amazing story to tell about the importance of faith and sacrifice. God rewarded those qualities. In the battle where he was severely wounded his life was literally saved by an object he carried in a chest pocket. Before he entered the army his aunt gave Long a Bible and the instructions to read it daily and "keep it close to his heart." He did both. The Bible absorbed the shrapnel that would have pierced his heart and taken his life. The merging of symbolism and realism of the "saving power of the Bible" gave Doc Long a tangible message to share with others. Doc Long shared his patriotism and faith with others for the remaining 73 years of his life.

People who do heroic acts have to draw their strength from somewhere. For Doc Long the source of his strength was his faith in a living God. He spoke often about God's influence on his life.



So what does this mean for you and me? Few of us are war heroes and many haven't been involved in life-saving heroic acts. But, there are people who look up to you and me for whatever attributes we exemplify in our lives. We aren't perfect but as people of faith, we have a risen Savior to follow. What is important is that people see the source of strength in *our* lives. For me, that source is the same as Doc Long – that of Jesus Christ. Jesus not only gives us everything we have, He promises He will be with us through all our challenges. Serving Him is what motivates me, as it certainly did for Doc Long.

Jesus was with Doc Long for the 18 hours he laid wounded on that battlefield in France. The strength Jesus gave Doc Long to survive that ordeal was for the purpose of influencing people for the remainder of his wonderful life. Jesus will also help you through the trials you face, so that you can share the Good News with others. It is God's intent that the trials and challenges you overcome will be an inspiration to others. The challenges you face aren't the end of the story. The story is how God can be the source of strength to overcome the challenges you face. You might be a hero and role model to someone else as you display God's power through your life.

Scripture: "The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him (Exodus 15:2).

Question: From where do you draw your strength in difficult times? Has it carried you through the issues you face?

Prayer: Most gracious Heavenly Father. We thank You for those who make personal sacrifices for our freedom. We know their strength comes from You. We pray that we can draw upon you for strength and that our faith can be a positive influence to others. Amen.

For a more complete story of Doc Long's survival, click on this link: <http://www.kernersvillenc.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/The-Saving-Power-of-the-Bible-ver-2.pdf>