

## Who Are Our Real Heroes?

'Greater love has no one than this, when someone gives up their life for their friends' (John 15:13).

How much greater love is shown by real heroes when they are prepared to give up their lives for strangers? So who are our real heroes? Our real heroes are the men and women in the police service, fire service, special emergency service volunteers, search and rescue teams, flying doctor personnel, beach life savers, paramedics, front line medical staff both ambulance personnel plus in-hospital emergency and intensive care personnel, Medicin San Frontier (Doctors Without Borders), electricians who go out in stormy conditions to restore electricity or to save someone from fallen power lines, the Army, Navy, Air Force, Defence Force, reservists and similar specialised personnel, returned service personnel; true war heroes, international peace keepers and those people who have studied and specialised solely to help others or save lives, knowing full well they could lose their own life while engaging in their chosen profession. Collectively, they are true, genuine heroes, people to be respected and regarded as important. These heroes have studied, some for years for the sole purpose of doing good to and for others. They do not study to receive accolades, they study for our gain and for our benefit. Some give their lives for us. They do not want to die young but the fact is some are prepared to do it. Some are maimed for life while defending us. They are the epitome of, 'Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself' (Matthew 22:39). The 'neighbour' in this context is any person we are in contact with, not necessarily the person next door.

These front line workers never close down. They are always there for us. They work long hours, they are often away from their families for months at a time, they endure shift work, they are comforting, they are patient and kind to the most bothersome of people. These true heroes are sometimes spat on, attacked, assaulted, abused, stabbed, shot at and many die in their honourable attempt to save a life, almost always the life of a stranger. They are often placed in the most stressful situations and have to make instant decisions, decisions that would cause great panic for most of us. Often a telephone call is all that is needed to receive help from our local heroes at any time. Imagine how difficult life would be without them! We need to be thankful for them and grateful they are here. Many of us would not be alive today if it were not for the heroes who saved us. These true heroes are taken for granted. Often, they are not appreciated or respected by some people. How many individuals actually thank these people for saving them or just for being there for them? These genuine heroes deserve honour, respect and gratitude for what they do for us. What can we do to honour our heroes? We can say thanks to any of the above mentioned genuine heroes. We can show respect for the police, not abuse paramedics, allow an ambulance, police car or fire truck to get to the emergency by pulling to one side of the roadway. Lack of respect for authorities, police and other emergency crews is a major problem and it is the job of parents to teach their children to respect authority and the law. 'You will teach them diligently to your children, and talk to them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up' (Deuteronomy 6:7).

The point to this article is to bring attention to the difference between our real true heroes as those mentioned above, and people who just happen to be famous. Many people are not heroes at all but receive that title anyway by adoring fans. Sports people, musicians and actors are not heroes, they just happen to be famous. Many of them do a lot for charities and that is commendable but they study their particular craft for their own financial gain and prestige. Imaginary 'heroes' like Batman, Spiderman, Superman are fictional characters and cannot be heroes. Actors merely play the role of fictional characters so how can that be regarded as heroism? Musicians are not heroes; they just play music. People who play sports, play games for a living. They may be healthy but they are not heroes.

Who were the world's greatest genuine heroes? Abraham was a hero. He was the one who helped bring us the knowledge of eternal salvation by listening to God and obeying Him. He taught his children and grandchildren about God. "I (God) have known Abraham, to the end (of his life) he will command his children and his household after him so they may keep the ways of God, to do righteousness and justice" (Genesis 18:19). But of course, the greatest Hero Who ever lived was Jesus. He gave up His life so all people on earth could find their way to God. 'By this we know love, because Jesus laid down His life for us so we ought to lay down our lives for others' (1 John 3:16). That does not necessarily mean to die for them, but it does mean to help others when they need help. Jesus said, when we do good things for others, it is the same as doing good things for Him personally. Good things like providing food, water, clothing, medical aid, visiting the sick, visiting prisoners, caring for the elderly, disabled and others whenever they need it. "Truly I tell you, when you did these good things for one of the least of these, My people, you did it for Me" (Matthew 25:40). "Whoever gives one of these little children (something as small as) a cup of cold water to drink, they will receive their reward" (Matthew 10:42).

Jesus died on the cross so our sin could be forgiven, but He did more than that. 'Jesus suffered for you, leaving for you His personal example, so you should follow in His footsteps. He was not guilty of any sin nor was deceit or guile ever found on His lips. When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult

in return. When He was abused He made no threats of vengeance but He trusted Himself to God Who judges fairly. He personally bore our sins on His own body on the cross so we might die to sin and live in righteousness and by His wounds (from being whipped, stabbed and nailed up) you can receive healing. You were going astray like sheep, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls' (1 Peter 2:21 to 25).

Amen and God bless you.

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