We all love heroes. The recently deceased Stan Lee brought heroes to life through his comic book characters and hits on the big screen. From 1963 through the present, he took his loyal fans on a grand adventure with the Avengers. Known as "Earth’s Mightiest Heroes," the Avengers appeal to us because they fearlessly fight for justice, they’re part of something bigger than themselves and they have superhuman abilities.

While fantasy heroes and fantastic plots entertain us, we live and work with everyday heroes: soldiers, servants of God, avengers who carry out God’s wrath on the wrongdoers of this world. While they may not have superhuman abilities, they fearlessly fight for justice, and they’re definitely part of something bigger than themselves. In many ways, they’re earth’s mightiest heroes.

Although it’s great to acknowledge our soldiers — servants of God, avengers who carry out God’s wrath on the wrongdoers of this world — I believe it’s even more important to acknowledge the ultimate Avenger.

Continued on page 4
I recently took advantage of an opportunity to attend the U.S. Army Airborne School in Fort Benning, Ga. In three weeks, my instructors transformed a 44-year-old “leg” into a “five-jump chump” paratrooper. How’d they do it? Simple repetition of critical physical responses, such as the Parachute Landing Fall (PLF) and memorization of common sense rules. I found one set of rules particularly helpful not only for prolonging the life of a paratrooper but also for enhancing the life of a Christian.

The three rules of the air are as follows:

1. Always look before you slip.
2. Always slip in the opposite direction to avoid other jumpers.
3. The lower jumper always has the right of way.

These rules save lives because they keep paratroopers from getting tangled up with other paratroopers on their descent to the ground. By “pulling a slip,” a paratrooper slightly tilts the parachute canopy, allowing the escaping air to slowly propel the jumper in the opposite direction of the slip. The concept is simple: Slip away from danger!

As I learned the three rules of the air, I had a great discussion with my close friend and Airborne Chaplain, Bob Davis. As he shared his experiences from more than 100 successful jumps, he connected the rules of the air with life as a Christian. He said, “It’s just like sin. You want to slip away as fast and safely as possible!” The Apostle Paul said it like this: “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body” (1 Cor. 6:18).
The great Lenten hymn “Go to Dark Gethsemane” retells Jesus’ suffering in the garden prior to his arrest, trial and crucifixion. As the hymn unfolds, you are invited to “go to dark Gethsemane” when you feel tempted, overwhelmed and unloved:

“Go to dark Gethsemane,
All who feel the tempter’s power;
Your Redeemer’s conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away;
Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.”

(GSB 436:1)

Gethsemane, located on the Mount of Olives, is a place of sanctuary. David, hunted down by a wicked son, found refuge near there (2 SAM. 15). Ezekiel and Zechariah refer to it concerning war and the end times (EZEK. 11:23 AND ZECH. 14:4). In both, the power, majesty and might of God is on display. (EZEK. 11:23 AND ZECH. 14:4).

In contrast, in Matt. 26:36–56, Gethsemane displays the magnificent power of God in servitude. Humiliation and outpouring of excruciating emotion leading to Jesus standing and obedient to the Father’s will — suffering and death for the redemption of all humanity.

The hymn asks of us to “go to dark Gethsemane.” We respond by saying, “Yes!”


Paratroopers know it’s extremely dangerous to get tangled up in someone else’s parachute or static lines on the way to the ground. The same is true for sexual relationships. It’s extremely dangerous for couples to get tangled up sexually on the way to the wedding ceremony. In order to keep safe, we need to follow the three rules of dating:

1. Always plan a way out of sexual encounters.
2. Always move in the opposite direction of anyone seeking a sexual relationship outside of the safety of a marriage covenant.
3. You are responsible for controlling your own sexual actions.

These rules might seem outdated. They may be met with resistance or even ridicule, but they work. In reality, the most successful marriages are the ones where both individuals slipped away from sexual immorality. But what if you’ve already failed to slip away from sexual immorality? What if you’ve gotten yourself into a tangled sexual mess? With genuine repentance to God, forgiveness and restoration can be part of your future. You may have a “hard landing,” but you can survive. If you’re hopelessly entangled and don’t know what to do, set up an appointment with your chaplain to find out how to perform emergency landing procedures!
I’m convinced Stan Lee’s comic book and big screen heroes appeal to us because deep down we know there’s a cosmic battle of good versus evil. Even deeper down, we know that we’re powerless to fight this battle on our own. We need a hero!

The ultimate Avenger came and fought against earth’s mightiest enemies: sin, death and the power of the devil. He destroyed sin by living a perfect life. He destroyed death by coming back to life, and he destroyed the power of the devil by taking his place as the supreme Servant of God, the ultimate Avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoers of all creation.

The ultimate Avenger, earth’s mightiest Hero, is now preparing for the final cosmic battle of good versus evil. He’s recruiting a team of avengers, servants of God, who will bring God’s complete wrath against sin, death and the power of the devil. If you want a description of the battle, find a Bible and read the 19th chapter in the book of Revelation.

Here’s a sneak preview: “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ... He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty” (REV. 19:11–13, 15B).