



## THE MODEL FOR PRESIDENTIAL CHARACTER -- GEORGE WASHINGTON

"The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all." --George Washington (1796)

George Washington's birthday (February 22, 1732) was spontaneously celebrated nationally from the date of his death in 1799 until 1879, when Congress officially established the observance. In 1971, however, the celebration was changed from the date of his birthday to the third Monday in February, and with that change arose the generic "Presidents' Day."



Consistent with the degradation of civic knowledge since then, most Americans know little about Washington beyond his standing as our first president, and his having accepted responsibility for chopping down a cherry tree when confronted by his father. Of course, that "I cannot tell a lie" cherry tree tale is a legend, but what it portrays of Washington's character is not.

Today, the once-reverent observance of [George Washington](#) has devolved into a holiday that lumps

Washington together with more recent presidential featherweights like Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Barack Hussein Obama. The comparison is laughable, but given the implications, it is also appalling.

In this election year, we Patriots should take a moment to refresh our knowledge of the character attributes we seek in a president. Moreover, as the [foundation of our nation](#), built by Washington and our other Founders and defended by [generations of American Patriots](#) since, is being undermined by the current generation of [political oppressors](#), I encourage you to share this knowledge with others.

Perhaps no group is more in need of a proper understanding of [American Liberty](#) than those whose civic knowledge has been severely disabled by [academic oppressors](#).

For example, consider how intellectually disabled a generation of students mentored by Mount Holyoke "presidential historian" Joseph Ellis must be, given his assertion in Time Magazine this week that "[Washington] began the political tradition that produced a Union victory in the Civil War, the Federal Reserve Board, Social Security, Medicare, and most recently, Obamacare. He had no patience in his own time with a states' rights interpretation of the Constitution and would have found the conservative agenda of the modern Republican Party and its Tea Party allies a repudiation of all he stood for."

Of course, Time's editors failed to issue a disclaimer noting that their esteemed source is a fraud and fabricator. In 2001, the Boston Globe revealed that Ellis had been telling his spellbound young students tall tales of his involvement in the civil rights movement in the South, of his valor as a combat platoon leader in Vietnam, and of his later activities as an intrepid anti-war leader at Yale. All lies.

Setting all this aside, however, Ellis and his cadres of historical revisionists have but one goal -- to [subvert our Constitution](#) and render it nothing more than what Thomas Jefferson described as "a mere thing of wax ... which they may twist and shape into any form they please."

George Washington, and every president since, has [sworn to uphold our Constitution](#), as prescribed in Article II, Section 1, which specifies: "Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: 'I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.'"

Unfortunately for our Republic and for the future of Liberty, too many of them have forsaken that oath in exchange for partisan power.

Washington, however, was steadfast in his devotion and obedience to our Constitution, and his presidential character is a model for all generations.

He was chosen by unanimous decision of the Second Continental Congress as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, by delegates as President of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, and as our first national president by the electoral colleges of 1789 and 1792.

Despite modernist revision, it is evident through his own words, and those who knew him well, that Washington was a devoted Christian and demonstrated the character and humility according to his convictions. Though he was a strong proponent of religious liberty, it is his Christian spirit, which fortified his standing as the greatest political leader in history.



Washington was a humble but fearless leader, whether in combat or convention, leadership becoming a Christian Patriot. He led from the front, which at 6'3" on horseback made him a prime target. At the 1755 Battle of Fort Wilderness, then as a British officer, in two hours of fierce fighting he had two

horses shot from under him and when the smoke cleared, his coat had four bullet holes.

In 1776, after having the new Declaration of Independence read to his troops, General Washington ordered chaplains for every regiment with the prescription that "every officer and man, will endeavour so to live, and act, as becomes a Christian Soldier, defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his country."

As was the case at Fort Wilderness, Washington led from the front in the bloody Revolutionary War battles of Princeton in '77 and Monmouth in '78.

Surviving the harsh winter of Valley Forge in 1778, he insisted, "that Divine service be performed every Sunday at 11 o'clock, in each Brigade which has a Chaplain. Those Brigades which have none will attend the places of worship nearest to them. It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example for their men. While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to laud the more distinguished Character of Christian. The signal instances of Providential goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labors with complete success demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of gratitude and piety to the Supreme Author of all good."

At the time, Reverend Henry Muhlenberg of a Lutheran church near Valley Forge wrote, "I heard a fine example today, namely, that His Excellency General Washington rode around among his army yesterday and admonished each and every one to fear God, to put away the wickedness that has set in and become so general, and to practice the Christian virtues."

At the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, George III heard that Washington was voluntarily laying down his sword to return to his beloved family and farm, and responded, "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world." And, of course, Washington did.

In '83, Washington wrote the 13 governors of the several states, "I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and that state over which you preside, in His holy protection; that He would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the field; and finally, that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose examples in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation. I have the Honor to be, with much esteem and respect, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant."

As president in '89, Washington wrote, "No man who is profligate in his morals, or a bad member of the civil community, can possibly be a true Christian."

His [Thanksgiving proclamation](#) declared, "It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor."

To gain real insight into Washington as president, it would be sufficient to read his [First Inaugural Address](#), delivered on April 30, 1789, and his [Farewell Address](#) of September 19, 1796. These two addresses embody the real George Washington, and the true spirit of a Patriot.

In the former, he stated, "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American People."

In the latter, he wrote, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish Government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government."

He made plain in his Farewell, "Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. ... Let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

If this great man's own words weren't enough, we also know Washington's character through the words of [his peers](#).

His confidant, Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, said of Washington in eulogy, "First in war, first in peace, and

first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in humble and enduring scenes of private life. Pious, just, humane, temperate, and sincere; uniform, dignified, and commanding; his example was as edifying to all around him as were the effects of that example lasting."

Henry Lee, the father of another humble Christian, Robert E. Lee, also noted, "Correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence and virtue always felt his fostering hand. The purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues. ... Such was the man for whom our nation mourns."

Abigail Adams wrote, "He is polite with dignity, affable without formality, distant without haughtiness, grave without austerity; modest, wise and good."

Declaration signer Francis Hopkinson wrote, "To him the title of Excellency is applied with peculiar propriety. He is the best and the greatest man the world ever knew. In private life, he wins the hearts and wears the love of all who are so happy as to fall within the circle of his acquaintance. In his public character, he commands universal respect and admiration. Conscious that the principles on which he acts are indeed founded in virtue and truth, he steadily pursues the arduous work with a mind neither depressed by disappointment and difficulties, nor elated with temporary success. ... One age cannot do justice to his merit; but the united voices of a grateful posterity shall pay a cheerful tribute of undissembled praise to the great assertor of their country's freedom."

Thomas Jefferson noted of Washington, "He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern. Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or



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hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man."

On Washington's Birthday in 1792, Rev. Nathaniel Snowden and a group of 70 clergymen visited him at Mount Vernon. Of that visit he wrote, "I felt much impressed in his presence and reflected upon the hand and wonderful Providence of God in raising him up and qualifying him with so many rare qualities and virtues for the good of this country and the world. Washington was not only brave and talented, but a truly excellent and pious man of God and of prayer. He always retired before a battle and in any emergency for prayer and direction."

John Marshall, who fought with Washington at Valley Forge, and later was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote in his extensive biography of Washington, "Without making ostentatious professions of religion, he was a sincere believer in the Christian faith, and a truly devout man."

In other words, he was known best by what he *did*, not what he said.

Washington exemplified the humility of a devout Christian, a humility to which all Americans should aspire. His final words were, "'Tis well."

Unfortunately, all is *not* well with the Republican Liberty he and his Patriot Founders bequeathed to us.

In May of 1788, ahead of Virginia's convention to ratify the Constitution, Washington said, "A few short weeks will determine the political fate of America for the present generation, and probably produce no small influence on the happiness of society through a long succession of ages to come."

The same can be said of the next presidential election in a few short months.

Footnote: On the occasion of our bicentennial in 1976, Congress awarded Washington the rank of Five-Star General of the Armies of the United States. There is a movement now underway to award him the Medal

of Honor -- which would not only be fitting to the long list of recipients of that most distinguished award, but would assist the current generation's

understanding of the character and bravery of George Washington. We are supporting that award, and will keep you informed.