

## May I Quote You, General Washington?

### The Principles and Wisdom of Our First President

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By Mike Scruggs

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George Washington was born in Virginia on February 22, 1732, and was raised on the ethical and religious principles and educational and chivalrous traditions that constituted the ideal of a Virginia gentleman. He was particularly interested in military science and leadership arts and at the age of only 22 was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel and fought in the first battles of the French and Indian War. Following that he devoted himself to agricultural pursuits and managing his properties around Mount Vernon, Virginia. During this time he served in the Virginia Colonial Legislature (House of Burgesses), where he became a critic of British Colonial policy.

Washington attended the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1775 and was elected Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. After six years of struggle and many difficulties, the Colonial forces finally prevailed—with the help of French Naval forces--against British forces under Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, on October 19, 1781. Following ratification of the U. S. Constitution, the Electoral College unanimously elected Washington as the first President of the United States on April 30, 1789. He was elected for a second term and served until March 4, 1797. He retired to Mount Vernon and died on December 14, 1799.

Washington was more than a military hero and remarkable first President of the United States. He set a noble example of duty, honor, courage, perseverance, patriotism, and wise leadership that served many generations of Americans well. We should not allow that example to fade. I hope these quotes from our first Commander-in-Chief and President will continue to live in the hearts of our countrymen.

“All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual, and physical education I received from her.”

“Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation; for ‘tis better to be alone than in bad company.”

“Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder.”

“Be courteous to all, but intimate with few, and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence. True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.”

“Happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected.”

“It is our duty to make the best of our misfortunes...”

“A slender acquaintance with the world must convince every man that actions, not words, are the true criterion of the attachment of friends; and that the most liberal professions of goodwill are very far from being the surest marks of it.”

## May I Quote You, General Washington?

“To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.”

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“If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it; if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready to resist.”

“Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the rest is in the hands of God.”

“The time is near at hand which must determine whether Americans are to be free men or slaves.”

“The very atmosphere of firearms anywhere and everywhere restrains evil interference—they deserve a place of honor with all that is good.”

“I have always hoped that this land might become a safe and agreeable asylum to the virtuous and persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong.”

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these.”

“Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all.”

“Nothing is more harmful to the service, than the neglect of discipline for that discipline, more than numbers, gives one army superiority over another.”

“A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined.”

“However pacific the general policy of a Nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of Military knowledge for emergencies.

“Government is not reason; it is not eloquence; it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.”

The very idea of the power and right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every Individual to obey the established Government.”

“The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations, is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connections as possible.”

“The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage of this army. Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us only the choice of brave resistance, or the most abject submission. We have therefore, to resolve to conquer or die.’

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“The marvel of all history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments.”  
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“It is a wonder to me, there should be found a single monarch, who does not realize that his own glory and felicity must depend on the prosperity and happiness of his People”

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable support. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars.”

“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.”

“Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness.”

“I am sure that never was a people, who had more reason to acknowledge a Divine interposition in their affairs, than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency, which was so often manifested during our revolution, or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of God who is alone able to protect them.”

“Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

“No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States”

“The liberty enjoyed by the people of these states of worshiping Almighty God agreeably to their consciences, is not only among the choicest of their blessings, but also of their rights.”

“Every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience.”

“Government being among other purposes, instituted to protect the persons and consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but according to their stations, to prevent it in others.”

It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free government owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it.”

## May I Quote You, General Washington?

"If we cannot learn wisdom from experience, it is hard to say where it is to be found."

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We must never despair; our situation has been compromising before, and it changed for the better;

so I trust it will again. If difficulties arise, we must put forth new exertion and proportion our efforts

to the exigencies of the times."

"The hand of providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."

"Arbitrary power is most easily established on the ruins of liberty abused to licentiousness."

"The propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained."

"I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man."