



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Founders Deemed Religious Faith 'Indispensable' to Self-Government

In establishing a Constitutional Republic, America's Founders understood that a system of self-government could best succeed within a polity made up of virtuous, moral citizens. Which is why the Founders, as evidenced by the testimony below, believed that religious faith was indispensable to the prospects for a new nation dedicated to the ideals of human freedom and equality.

Our Founders emphasized morality was necessary for liberty to flourish:

- *"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion...Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."*
John Adams to Massachusetts Militia, 11 October 1798
- *"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim tribute to patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness – these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."*
George Washington, Farewell Address 1796
- *"The belief in a God all powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the world and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities to be impressed with it."*
James Madison, Letter to Frederick Beasley, November 20, 1825
- *"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth- that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that 'except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it.' I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel."*
-Benjamin Franklin, during the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, June 28, 1787