



"It is easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them."
—Alfred Adler

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A Patriot and a Traitor (Part Two)

In Part One, we discovered that, before he infamously betrayed the young United States of America, Benedict Arnold was an ardent and energetic patriot, training and equipping his soldiers at his own expense and leading them in a handful of both terrestrial and naval operations. In just a few years, he rose to the rank of Major General in the Continental Army and was considered a hero by many, certainly by those who fought with him for independence.

In addition to being zealous, Arnold craved public approval and recognition. He saw others grabbing credit that he justly deserved. In the attack on Fort Ticonderoga, although Arnold had been given authority to command the assault, he was forced to share the leading role with Ethan Allen to achieve the victory. As he embellished his own efforts, Allen later downplayed Arnold's contribution to the success of the assault. Truth be told, Allen and his Green Mountain Boys irresponsibly plundered the fort and raided its liquor supplies. For his part, knowing the weakness of their position, Arnold led his forces to strike and seize the British ships at St. John's, Canada, to prevent a retaliatory attack.

Ignoring Arnold's success, a divided Congress rejected his advice that they take advantage of British weakness and immediately invade Canada. Instead, it cut off money, supplies, and men to him—and rubbing salt in his wounds, it even began an investigation into Arnold's expenses. As a proud man, Arnold considered this as an insult to his honor.

This was not the only time Arnold suffered offense at the hands of those he thought were on his side. At the Battle of Saratoga in September 1777, General Horatio Gates' reticence to attack caused the patriots to retreat from the first round of fighting, and they may have suffered defeat rather than decisive victory a few weeks later were it not for Arnold's heroic actions. He led American troops in a mad dash between two redoubts, taking one and exposing the British camp. Despite this—and his own reluctance and incompetence—Gates took major credit for the victory, and Congress obliged by awarding him a medal for it!

Justified or not, these slights and shortcomings led Arnold to forget the reasons for which he was fighting. Stewing over these abuses while bedridden due to leg wounds suffered at Saratoga, he came to see subservience to the British Crown as the more reasonable course of action, and he soon began his treasonous correspondence with the British.

Unlike Benedict Arnold, we cannot lose sight of the righteousness of our cause. Despite [offenses](#) and lack of recognition, we must—without compromise—continue in our efforts to achieve victory over [this world](#). We should not seek the approval of men but God's good pleasure. [Hebrews 6:10](#) says, "[God](#) is fair. He won't forget what you've done or the [love](#) you've shown for him. You helped his holy people, and you continue to help them" (God's Word Translation). When [Jesus Christ](#) returns, His reward will be with Him. He will not forget our dedicated service and sacrifices.

Recall that Jesus says in [Matthew 24:10](#) that "many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another." Before Arnold betrayed his country, he first betrayed his friend, George Washington. He sold to the British secret information that he learned in the course of that relationship. After betraying his friend, his treasonous actions culminated in his offer to surrender West Point to the British for about three million of today's dollars.

He followed the course—offense, betrayal, hatred—that Jesus prophesied "many" will take in the end time.

After his plot was discovered, Arnold fled to British-occupied New York, where he became a Brigadier General in the British Army. He spent the rest of the war in a British uniform, fighting his own countrymen. He sailed to London in 1781, dying there twenty years later, forgotten in England and despised in America. All that he had worked for and all the sacrifices he had made came to nothing.

We recollect with fondness and admiration the dedication and sacrifices of those who endured—famous men like George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, as well as the less-well-known patriots like Crispus Attucks, a son of a slave and an American Indian woman, who became the first casualty of the Revolutionary War. Yet, Americans feel only contempt for Benedict Arnold. Benjamin Franklin is reported to have said of him, "Judas betrayed one man, Arnold three million."

The tragedy of Arnold is much greater when we consider not only his wasted sacrifices, but the hero's future that he threw away. Who knows how high he may have risen in the new government? His name may have become as revered as those of the Founders. His likeness may have graced our currency. Children would have learned of his brave exploits in school. Instead, Arnold's treasonous name has indeed become a byword and a proverb among the people: "Don't be a Benedict Arnold."

The apostle Paul writes in [1 Corinthians 2:9](#), "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that love Him." An indescribable reward awaits those of us who endure and remain loyal. We cannot afford to lose our vision of our righteous cause, as Arnold did, because it will undermine our loyalty to God and His Kingdom. We face the danger of losing far more than a prominent place in American history if we prove unfaithful.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Christian Zeal](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

As exemplified in his famous "Man in the Arena" speech, Theodore Roosevelt lived his life with vitality and energy. Whether hunting wild game or entertaining at an embassy party, he conducted his behavior with effervescent zeal. Quiet only when he was reading or studying, Theodore Roosevelt loved boxing, sparring, hiking, hunting, riding, ranching, fighting, and exploring. Roosevelt believed in living vigorously and zealously, pursuing life with all the energy at his disposal, giving his absolute all. His exemplary life provides a model for zeal, ardor, and enthusiasm. Zeal has often been discredited as the tool of the huckster or the charlatan. Christians, however, must develop passion and zeal for the Christian way of life and the prospect of the Kingdom of God. The Laodicean does have a form of zeal, but it is focused on material goals rather than spiritual goals. Consequently, it comes across to God as lack of zeal and commitment, appearing as apathy and detachment. God demands that our zeal be boiling hot, exuding ardor, fervency, and intensity focused single-mindedly on a goal, leading to a motivation to action or motivation to do something specific to please our God. Jesus Christ demonstrated godly zeal and fervor when He drove the moneychangers out of the temple. Wherever Jesus went, huge crowds pressed Him to heal the sick; He obliged them wholeheartedly. God's work provided His food. The apostle Paul's misguided zeal was (in the blink of an eye) sublimated into godly zeal at his calling on the road to Damascus, keeping him motivated in God's service for the rest of his life. Any Christian act we can do we should do with zeal.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Setting Spiritual Goals](#)

by Staff

Business advisors and self-help books recommend that we set goals and make plans to succeed in our chosen areas of endeavor. Why do we not do

this to help us overcome sin? There is a simple, easily remembered formula we can use to organize and prosecute the battle against our faults and weaknesses.

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