



We Still Hold These Truths: Rediscovering Our Principles, Reclaiming Our Future

By Matthew Spalding

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At a time when economic crisis, ever-expanding government, rising international threats, declining civic education, and many other problems cloud America's future, political leaders increasingly pay lip service to 'first principles' - the principles on which the nation was founded. But just what are those principles? On that question, sadly, politicians and pundits have little to say. Fortunately, Matthew Spalding provides the answer in "We Still Hold These Truths". Spalding, an expert in American political history at The Heritage Foundation, the esteemed Washington, D.C. - based research and educational institute, explains and brings to life ten core principles that define our national creed and common identity. His enlightening and entertaining tour through American history recalls our first principles as they were understood by the Founders and reveals their deep roots in Western civilization. But "We Still Hold These Truths" is more than an inspiring account of the nobility of America's accomplishments. It is also a bracing reminder of how far we have strayed off course as a nation. Spalding shows how readily political leaders and cultural elites abandon - indeed, trample on - the principles to which this country is dedicated. Even more troubling is how readily we all let it happen. Before we can rededicate ourselves to the core principles that made America, we must rediscover them. For as Thomas Jefferson observed, 'If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be'. Appreciating our vital heritage, Spalding lays out a strategy to reclaim our future - getting our nation back on track and holding accountable those who seek to take us in a different direction.

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Editorial Review

Review

The future of liberty depends on renewing America's principles

In the midst of frenzied efforts to remake our nation—of endless government initiatives involved in virtually every aspect of our daily lives—Americans are increasingly concerned: How did we get so far off track? And how can we get America back on course? Matthew Spalding answers these questions by looking to the timeless principles and practical wisdom that have been the source of America's monumental success. Spalding, an expert in American political history at The Heritage Foundation, the esteemed research and educational institution, calls for a great renewal of these unchanging principles—and a new appreciation of their preeminent status in our nation's life.

In *We Still Hold These Truths* Spalding explains and brings to life ten core principles that define us as a nation and inspire us as a people—liberty and equality, natural rights and the consent of the governed, private property and religious freedom, the rule of law and constitutionalism, all culminating in self-government at home and independence in the world. His enlightening and engaging tour through America's founding not only recalls the deep roots of our “first principles” in Western civilization but also reveals their enduring lessons for today.

We Still Hold These Truths also offers a bracingly fresh analysis of how and why we have lost our bearings as a nation. Spalding masterfully examines the progressive assault on the Founders' principles that began more than a century ago and that continues—indeed, is accelerating—in our time. Modern political leaders and cultural elites have all too readily abandoned the principles to which America is dedicated; even more troubling is how readily we all let it happen. Do we still hold these truths? Before we can rededicate our country to the core principles that made America the most prosperous, the strongest, and the freest nation in history, we must *rediscover* them ourselves. They must become again, as Thomas Jefferson said, “an expression of the American mind.” In a world of moral confusion, and of arbitrary and unlimited government, America's principles are our best access to permanent truths and the best ground from which to question the current direction of our nation. Upon this sure foundation, Spalding lays out a strategy to reclaim our future, and to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matthew Spalding is the director of the B. Kenneth Simon Center for American Studies at The Heritage Foundation. An expert on political history, constitutionalism, and religious liberty in America, he is the executive editor of the bestselling book *The Heritage Guide to the Constitution* and the author or editor of three other works. Spalding, who holds a Ph.D. in government from the Claremont Graduate School, lives with his family in northern Virginia.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

“A clear and compelling case for America's founding principles as an enduring source of real, practical guidance for today, explaining how we got so far off track and laying out **how to get our nation back on course.**”

—**William J. Bennett**, bestselling author of *America: The Last Best Hope* and nationally syndicated radio

host

“In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty. But what are those essentials? And where do we get them from? Matthew Spalding, both a scholar and Knight Templar of American constitutionalism, is uniquely qualified not only to shed light on these questio

ns but also to slay the intellectual dragons pitted against our Republic. **This is vital armament in the battle for constitutional restoration.**”

—**Jonah Goldberg**, editor at large, National Review Online

“In his **splendid** new book, Matthew Spalding provides a spirited defense of the truths asserted by our Founders when they conceived the American republic. **Combining the skills of the historian, the philosopher, and the political scientist**, Spalding shows why Americans in our time should be no less confident than our forebears in holding these truths, and no less forceful in asserting them.”

—**Robert P. George**, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Princeton University.

“**This book recovers the timeless truths** on which our self-governing nation was founded and which made America the model of human freedom. These first principles are the **indispensable** guides policy makers need now.”

—**Paul Ryan**, United States Congress

“At a time when the very freedoms we so recently fought and died for are being challenged on every front, Spalding’s **robust defense of America’s universal principles** reminds us why the United States must always be the champion of liberty, and why the self-evident truths it proclaims still inspire all those yearning to live free.”

—**Mart Laar**, former prime minister of Estonia

“With his trademark clarity and considerable eloquence, Spalding explains and extols our country’s principles and tells us why the way forward depends on reclaiming them. *We Still Hold These Truths* is **must reading for every American.**”

—**Mitt Romney**

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From reader reviews:

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Edith Stewart:

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