



Written by [Staff](#) on August 23, 2015

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Standing Against Defeat

Events and trends over the past several decades have been extremely disheartening to patriotic, God-loving Americans. One must cite among these events and trends the 1973 Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Roe v. Wade* abolishing all state restrictions on abortion; the federal government's ongoing usurpation of rights belonging to the states; the ever-increasing socialization of our society through the government's unconstitutional intrusion into fields such as welfare, healthcare, and education; the substitution by court decree or legislative action of radical egalitarianism in place of individual liberty; the use of public education to poison and corrupt the minds of the young; the involvement of America in an endless series of foreign wars; the sabotage of our country's control over our own borders; and so forth. One can cite also the dismal performance, by and large, of so-called conservative politicians in their failure to turn back, or even to try to turn back, the Left-liberal onslaught.



However, one of the most severe blows to the equanimity of tradition-minded Americans has been the Supreme Court's decision on June 26 of this year in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges* in which the court claimed to have discovered a fundamental constitutional right for same-sex couples to marry, thereby overturning state laws disallowing such "marriages" and apparently overturning the very definition of marriage.

Not only did that decision deeply shock many Americans, since it is a direct attack on traditional morality, but the threat that this decision portends to freedom of religion and even to freedom of speech horrifies them. For good reason are people discouraged over this latest lost battle in what has been called the Culture War, the fierce struggle in which the traditional biblical view of society is pitted against revolutionary Left-liberal subversion. Is this latest reverse so grave that we should give up the struggle and, in essence, surrender? Have America and the West become so dissolute that there is no hope? Are we now beyond the point of no return?

I wish to assert here that patriotic Americans should not give up the good fight, that we should not surrender, that there is indeed hope, and that we have not passed the point of no return. Good men *can* be elected to public office. Bad men *can* be driven from office and even prosecuted for treasonable or morally reprehensible acts. Supreme Court decisions and those of other courts *can* be reversed. The



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states *can* [nullify unconstitutional federal judicial usurpation](#) of power belonging to the states or the people, and the U.S. Congress *can* rein in judicial activism by [limiting the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court](#) and the jurisdictions of all lower federal courts. In addition, federal judges and Supreme Court justices who deliberately undermine our system of laws by manufacturing spurious constitutional rights out of thin air *can* be impeached.

And while this writer will not attempt to predict the future, I know nonetheless that history is replete with examples of the victory of causes that appeared hopeless, but were not. Those examples should give us hope and instill in us the courage to continue our efforts on behalf of all that is good, decent, honorable, and morally upstanding, as well as all that is conducive to the preservation of our precious American liberties.

Unkind to Christians

Since I am a Christian pastor, allow me to begin with an example I know best: how early Christianity dealt with adversity. When the Apostles embarked upon their commission to convert the world, their chances of achieving anything significant were seemingly nil. Had any of the potentates and nabobs of the world of 2,000 years ago heard of the commission given the Apostles to go forth and teach all nations, they would doubtless have laughed. Here, after all, were a group of complete nobodies, without education, without wealth, without influence, without access to the “rich and famous” around whom the world revolved, or so it appeared. Against them stood the overwhelming might of a pagan world empire and the hostility of most of the empire’s inhabitants. Yet, despite all, these men succeeded in planting the seeds for a future triumph, that is, they founded vibrant Christian communities throughout and even beyond the empire.

During the first three centuries of Christianity, periodic persecutions broke out that threatened to sweep it away. Some of these were localized, while others were empire-wide. A serious attack began under Nero, during which, according to tradition, Saints Peter and Paul were martyred. Others commenced during the reigns of Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, and Valerian. Yet after each persecution, the church came back stronger. Thus it was that the Christian writer Tertullian remarked that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

The greatest of the anti-Christian persecutions was that launched by Diocletian. Commencing in February 303, a campaign of burning, looting, beatings, imprisonments, and executions was launched. Testifying to the fact that great numbers suffered death is the church calendar, which contains the names of more martyrs from that period than from any of the previous persecutions. The authorities, aiming at the decapitation of the church, initially centered their attack on the clergy, especially the bishops, but then broadened it to include all Christian believers.

The persecution continued for 10 years, until the Emperor Constantine issued his famed Edict of Milan in 313, which extended toleration to Christians, giving them the same rights as the followers of other religions. In that instant, the situation for the church was altered dramatically. The church that the pagan authorities believed was on the brink of obliteration suddenly gained full freedom to carry out its mission in the world in peace. Instead of Christianity being obliterated by the mighty Roman Empire, it was the empire that was subsumed by Christianity. And this incredible sea change was accomplished by Christians simply doing what was right and speaking the truth, despite the adversities.



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One may argue that in the above chain of events God Himself favored the Apostles and the early Christians and so assured that they would succeed in time. Yet, do we not believe that about our own convictions? Do we not believe that Almighty God will favor our efforts if we do our duty in all things, to the full extent of our abilities? Are we not confident of His assistance? Do we not believe in the possibility of miracles?

Outnumbered, Not Outmatched

Let us now investigate some examples from military history. Cynics tell us that in warfare victory always belongs to the bigger battalions. But is that so? In each of the cases we will now examine, the smaller, or less well-equipped or well-trained, army, should have been defeated but was instead victorious.

Let us begin with the notable example from the ancient world, the Battle of Marathon. In the year 490 B.C., a huge Persian army, under King Darius I, invaded Greece. Now, in those days the Greeks were not a politically united people but were divided into small, independent city-states. And so, when the Persians landed near the town of Marathon, bent on total conquest, the Athenians sent an army to block them and, at the same time, requested assistance from Sparta, which, along with Athens, was one of the two largest city-states in Greece. However, the Spartans responded that they were in the midst of a religious festival, and therefore could not help. Hence, the Athenians were on their own, their only ally being Plataea, a small city-state that sent all it could, a small contingent.

Realizing that they could not hope to prevail against the huge Persian cavalry, the Athenians chose their ground with care, selecting an area on the plain of Marathon that was encompassed by marshes and mountains, thus nullifying the Persian cavalry as a factor. The Greeks, led by their general, Miltiades, attacked the Persian infantry with a force of approximately 9,000 Athenians, plus 1,000 Plataeans, against a Persian force roughly 10 times larger.

At some point during the battle, Miltiades ordered additional soldiers to both of his flanks, a strategy immediately noticed by the Persians who assumed, incorrectly, that with the flanks strengthened, the center must have become substantially weaker. The Persians therefore thrust into the center, which slowly yielded ground. But it was all a ploy by Miltiades and, as the Persians pushed into their enemy's center, the Greek flanks began to envelope them. Upon grasping what was happening, the Persians panicked and took flight, running as fast as their legs could carry them. The death toll for the Persians was 6,400 men, while the Greeks lost fewer than 200. Thus ended the invasion of Greece by King Darius I.

The Second Punic War began in 218 B.C., when Hannibal of Carthage marched over the Alps with his army and war elephants to conquer Rome and the whole of Italy. For almost two decades, his army marched up and down the Italian peninsula, wreaking havoc and leaving a swath of death and destruction. Several times, Roman armies sent to destroy the invader were instead themselves annihilated. At the Battle of Cannae, a Roman army of 100,000 was crushed by a much inferior Carthaginian force, costing Rome the loss of upwards of 70,000 men. It was the worst military calamity in Roman history up to that time. An impartial observer living at that moment would surely have predicted that Rome was doomed. But the Romans were a tough people and were disinclined to submit to the ignominy of surrender or bend their necks before enemies.



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Then, just as things looked their bleakest, a brilliant Roman general, Publius Cornelius Scipio, known to historians as Scipio Africanus or Scipio the Great, a man both resolute and clever, stepped to the fore. Instead of contesting Hannibal on Roman soil, which had cost Rome so many lives, Scipio did the unforeseen. He launched a counter-invasion of Carthaginian territory in North Africa. And so it was the turn of the Romans to devastate the enemy's lands. Hannibal and his army were hurriedly recalled from Italy to defend the homeland, but were defeated at the Battle of Zama, Carthage losing 20,000 men, while Rome lost a mere 2,500. The genius of Scipio the Great had brought about an astonishing reversal of fortune, one that few prior to that time would have thought possible.

Upon the death of Alexander the Great, the empire he had conquered broke apart into several kingdoms, each governed by one of Alexander's generals. Thus the people of Judea found themselves under a series of Greek kings of the Seleucid Dynasty. During the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, King of Syria, who ruled from 175 to 164 B.C., an attempt was made to Hellenize the Judeans forcibly, that is, to replace their Jewish culture and religion with the Greek culture and religion. Antiochus went so far as to outlaw by decree all Jewish religious practices and to install pagan idols in the Jerusalem temple, which resulted in an explosion of outrage. A revolt broke out led by a pious family known as the Maccabees, or Hasmoneans, the patriarch of which was named Mattathias. Upon the death of Mattathias, his son Judas Maccabee took the helm, leading his forces to a series of victories over the occupying Greeks. The Judeans were greatly outnumbered and so, by necessity, victories were achieved by guerrilla-style warfare, and by those means they eventually captured Jerusalem, where they purified and re-consecrated the temple and returned the people to their religious and cultural traditions. It required two decades of intense struggle for the Maccabees to achieve their aims, which were independence from the alien invader and religious and cultural freedom. Dedicated men thus won the day!

The Battle of Tours in Gaul (modern-day France) in October of 732 has always been regarded as a great turning point in the history of Christendom. Early in the eighth century, the Muslim Umayyad Caliphate advanced from its conquests of Syria, Egypt, and North Africa into Visigothic Spain, which they largely overran. Their plan was to continue to advance into Europe, like an unstoppable avalanche, eventually conquering all of Christendom. Having subjugated Spain, the next step was the conquest of Gaul. The Muslim juggernaut therefore advanced over the Pyrenees, ravaging southern and western Gaul and accumulating gigantic quantities of loot in the process.

In the meanwhile, a Frankish prince, Charles Martel ("Martel" means "the Hammer"), realizing the danger that approached, gathered together a somewhat ragtag army to halt the Muslim advance. Though the army included a core of veterans, it was made up mostly of unseasoned conscripts. No one today can be certain as to the size of the Frankish force — historical accounts range from 15,000 to 75,000. Modern studies conclude that it was most probably around 30,000 strong. The Muslim army was several times that size, probably around 100,000, and possibly, according to some historians, as large as 400,000.

On October 10, 732, the two armies met. Sir Edward Creasy, in his renowned book *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, writes that the Muslims "were filled with wrath and pride, and they were first to begin the fight. The [Muslim] horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side until the going down of the sun." The following morning the battle resumed, the superior Muslim army slashing its way into the center of the



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Franks. At some point, however, the Muslims heard an outcry that the Franks were attacking the Muslim base camp, where all of the loot from their previous conquests was stored. Consequently, a body of Muslim horsemen left the battle to ride to the rescue of the base camp. The Muslim throng, however, seeing the horsemen suddenly turn and depart the battle, erroneously assumed that the tide had turned against them and so began to retreat in panic. The Muslim commander, Abdderrahman, rode forward to attempt to halt the retreat, but was suddenly cut down by a multitude of Frankish spears. Seeing their leader fall in battle, the retreat turned into a rout, the Franks pursuing and killing great numbers of the enemy and winning the day. And so it was that Charles “the Hammer” Martel, the brave leader of brave men, saved Christian civilization.

Our own General George Washington had, according to conventional wisdom, little chance of victory in the American War for Independence. The forces of the British Empire so vastly outweighed his own that, had he been a defeatist, he would have been finished from the start. One could accurately say that, at certain times in that war, Washington’s army was an already-defeated army — disease-ridden, downhearted, poorly equipped, poorly clothed, poorly fed, *but never poorly led*. At Valley Forge many of the soldiers were broken by the cold and hunger and, despairing of the future, deserted and returned home. Many among the troops doubted the possibility of success, but never the general. He refused to be intimidated and refused to relent.

For Washington, there was “no substitute for victory” (to borrow the words of another heroic American, General Douglas MacArthur). Accordingly, he demanded that Congress properly supply his army, which finally they did. By February 1778 food, other supplies, and equipment began arriving. Next, Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian officer appointed by Washington as inspector general of the army, began to train and drill the troops at Valley Forge, turning them from a band of bedraggled rebels into a genuine disciplined army. And so it was that by the summer of 1778, the army that marched out of Valley Forge was ready to fight and to win. And at the end of it all, three years later, General Washington’s faith in ultimate victory prevailed and he had the honor of receiving the surrender of the British army of General Charles Cornwallis. Military history shows us with crystal clarity that optimism in the face of adversity is crucial.

For our final example, I have chosen a story from the world of sports. Most of us are aware that the long-distance running event known as a marathon is a race in which the contestants must run a course that is a bit more than 26 miles in length and in which speed and endurance are together the primary factors, since contestants who forget the endurance factor often exhaust themselves and are unable to finish.

The idea for the modern marathon came about in connection with the first of the modern Olympic games in Athens in 1896. It was created in honor of the legendary Phidippides, who, after the victory of Greece at the Battle of Marathon, ran the roughly 25 miles to Athens to announce the victory of the Greeks over the Persians with the words, “We have won!”

At the 1896 Olympic games in Athens, the Greeks were doing poorly in the track and field events, which was humiliating for them since they were not only the game’s hosts but were the descendants of the people who had originated the Olympics in ancient times. Few thought that they would do well in the 26-mile marathon race. But young Spyridon Louis was a determined athlete, determined to do well despite the odds against him. Imagine an athlete running a marathon race. Imagine that, *unlike* Spyridon Louis, our hypothetical athlete convinces himself beforehand of the certainty that he will lose,



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that he has *no chance* of victory. Or imagine that near the beginning of the race, the athlete stumbles and falls, and then immediately gives up and goes home. He may as well have not even begun! In fact, he may as well give up running at all, in any races. The athlete's lack of hope colors the outcome; he thinks that he is a born loser and thus becomes precisely that — a loser. That is what is called a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Yet Spyridon Louis was far from a loser. He was certain that he could and would win the race. Early in the race a Frenchman took the lead, and later an Australian. But Louis was not deterred. It is said that during the race, he even stopped at a tavern to down a quick glass of wine, to boost his energy. When warned that the stop might cost him the race, he laughingly assured his listeners that he would catch up and win. And so he did!

When the crowd saw Louis enter the stadium ahead of the other runners, it went wild with joy. Two Greek princes met Louis as he entered, completing the victor's lap around the stadium track with him. He was presented to the Greek king, who offered him anything he might desire. Prior to the games, Louis had helped his father in a small mineral water business, transporting water by push cart. Louis modestly asked the king if he might have a cart with a donkey, to help him in his business. And so, a simple man with a dream and with determination rose up from obscurity to become the hero of his people.

Rules for Victory

One could fill a sizeable volume with examples such as those that we have just noted. They, and countless other examples, tell us that very often in history hopeless situations are not really hopeless at all, that tough men and women often overcome and defeat unfavorable odds, and that an underdog, the expected loser, can win in spite of all. Such wins, however, require certain qualities that transform a loser into a champion.

First, defeatism inevitably defeats, so defeatism *must* be defeated. Defeatist generals do not win battles. An athlete who convinces himself that he cannot win will not win, in fact, cannot win. A positive outlook, while it does not guarantee success, is nonetheless essential to success in any competition. A negative outlook, while appropriate in certain situations in life, is not appropriate in competitive situations, especially in life-or-death situations. What are the qualities that can bring victory to a hopeless cause?

From our first example, the Apostles who were sent into the world to win men's souls, we learn that *faith* is a prerequisite to achieving our aims. Faith, the foundation of all belief systems, sets forth focal points on which we may center our feelings of trust, of assurance, and of confidence. Each of the 12 Apostles, except for St. John the Evangelist, was martyred, and each of them was well aware of that likelihood even before he began. Nevertheless, faith, instilled by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, compelled them to persist in their missions.

From the Christians of the early church we learn of *courage*. The early Christians were ordinary citizens of the empire. Most of them were very much like all of us; that is, they earned their livings from some trade or profession, and most had families to support. And so the periodic persecutions meant grave difficulties, even catastrophe, even death, for entire families. And while it is true that during the first through the third centuries there were sometimes periods of peace, when Christianity was somewhat grudgingly permitted to exist, everyone knew that, at best, the church lived on the edges of legality and



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therefore could be proscribed and persecuted in a moment's notice. To be a Christian in the pagan Roman Empire required courage. Those exact conditions were repeated during the several hundred years that the Turks occupied the Christian lands of the Balkans and, of course, under the godless Bolshevik regime in Russia during much of the 20th century. There also, precisely as in the days of the early church, it took courage to be a Christian. In our own times, who could credibly claim that the situation is more desperate or despotic than during, say, the height of pagan Rome when the emperors were worshipped as gods? Moreover, God put us in the times in which we live. Is it not up to us to do our duty without succumbing to defeatism, to do as did other believers throughout history?

The Athenians and their allies, the Plataeans, were doubtless painfully aware that the outcome of the Battle of Marathon would decide whether they would live as free men, or as subjects groveling under the heel of the Persians. They recognized that the least slackness would spell *finis* for all of Greece. The battle would also decide whether their culture, the culture of the Greeks, which is a large part of the basis of our own Western Civilization, would survive. For these warriors, there were no alternatives except victory or death. Hence, to beat the superior foe, *tenacity*, utter doggedness, utter stubbornness, was essential.

The outcome of the Second Punic War, in which Rome triumphed over its Carthaginian challenger, was narrowly won, what we would term a "close call." For more than 17 years, the Romans were unable to eject the enemy army from their homeland or bring about Hannibal's defeat. The Romans were indeed brave and tenacious, but it seemed all for naught since Hannibal continued his campaign of ruin. But then a Roman general, Scipio, developed a brilliant plan to strike the enemy at its own home, draw his enemy out of Italy, and bring about the decisive confrontation on North African soil. So it was that *ingenuity*, that creativity, won the day.

The Maccabees achieved their aims in part because they were prepared to exchange a life of comfort for one of harshness and risk. The desire for comfort and ease informs people not to resist but to conform. In contrast, the desire for freedom very often requires a *willingness to sacrifice*, sometimes to sacrifice significantly. Truth be told, a people not willing to sacrifice for the sake of their liberty deserve the tyranny that will inevitably descend on them.

Charles Martel earned the name "Martel," "the Hammer," by a series of military successes before his confrontation with the Muslims. He defeated Neustria (a Frankish Kingdom in the western part of what is now France) in 716 and again in 717, beat the Saxons in 718, occupied Friesland in 719, and beat the Saxons a second time in 720. Between 725 and 728 he reestablished Frankish control over Bavaria, and in 730, brought the remainder of southern Germany into the Frankish empire. A string of prior victories does not guarantee future success, especially against so forbidding a foe as that marching toward him from Spain. Yet Charles was a master at warfare; hence, when he met the Muslims, he was filled with *confidence*, despite his ostensibly inferior army. Without that supreme confidence, it is difficult to imagine a happy outcome to the Battle of Tours.

It is impossible for an inveterate pessimist to be a successful leader. When appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army by Congress, General Washington was certainly aware that he had a formidable task ahead of him: to hold at bay and then defeat and expel from American territory the military forces of the greatest empire in the world. He succeeded because he was a steadfast *optimist*, unwilling to allow any adversity to deter him in his quest for victory.



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Like all athletes, Spyridon Louis set certain objectives for himself when training for his Olympic run and, of course, when actually competing in the marathon. To use a popular expression, he was “*goal oriented*.” He remained self-assured since the goals he set were realistic in the sense that they were feasible for a strong young man whose occupation in life had already provided him with the stamina needed to run a marathon, and to win.

These were the qualities that cleared the way for unexpected wins: faith, courage, tenacity, ingenuity, a willingness to sacrifice, confidence, optimism, and the setting of realistic goals. All of the aforementioned heroes to some degree possessed all of these qualities, some excelling in one or more of them. These are the same qualities that we must look to, qualities that in our own time can turn back Left-liberalism, which pretends to be a philosophy but is really a criminal conspiracy, a mixture of deception and pure treason, and the precursor to totalitarianism.

Let us demand the restoration of greatness to our country, the greatness that once defined it, the greatness that conferred upon it the admiration of the world. In this struggle our principal enemy is defeatism. Defeatism paralyzes patriotic Americans and guarantees defeat. Defeatism cheats our forebears, to whom we owe a debt of unending gratitude for all that they sacrificed on our behalf. And it cheats our progeny, to whom we are pledged to pass on a country better, politically, economically, and morally, than we found. Let us never allow defeatism to defeat us. Instead, let us ever speak the truth, honor the truth, and uphold the truth, to our last breath.



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