



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 5, 2023

What's Next for Coach Joe Kennedy?

Even though the players on his team wanted to pray with him following their victory Saturday night, Bremerton (Washington) High School assistant football coach Joe Kennedy decided to go it alone. Following the 27-12 win over Mount Douglas, Kennedy [went to the 50-yard line and took a knee](#).

Many of his players showed their support by painting crosses on their faces.

In an interview with Fox News following the game, Kennedy said, "Everything was an answered prayer.... I had a whole bunch of the team there. A lot of them wanted to join me in prayer but ... I just wanted to do it by myself."



AP Images
Joe Kennedy

Coach Kennedy never mentioned, or perhaps doesn't even know, the impact his eight-year-long battle with secularists is having across the land. Not only did the school have to ante-up nearly \$2 million in legal fees to pay for Kennedy's lawyers, but the quashing of the canard of "separation of church and state" has obliterated the hammer secularists and anti-Christian forces have been using for decades to eliminate the faith from the public square.

In the 2022 Supreme Court ruling *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, Justice Neal Gorsuch wrote:

Both the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment protect expressions like Mr. Kennedy's....

The Constitution and the best of our traditions counsel mutual respect and tolerance, not censorship and suppression, for religious and nonreligious views alike....

Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a personal religious observance, based on a mistaken view that it has a duty to suppress religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech....

Kennedy's private religious exercise did not come close to crossing any line one might imagine separating protected private expression from impermissible government coercion.

The Constitution neither mandates nor tolerates that kind of discrimination.

Coach Kennedy's restoration to his position at Bremerton is a major victory in the war against faith (and especially Christianity) being waged by secular forces in America, using the myth of separation of church and state as justification.

Coach Kennedy has written about the ordeal from his point of view. In [Average Joe: The Coach Joe Kennedy Story](#), to be released in late October, his aim is to "tell our story and tell it right."

Along the way, Coach Kennedy has become a national celebrity in the war, travelling around the United



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States. He said, "It seems like people are really hungry to rally behind something. People just need a little inspiration. And millions of Americans stood up alongside me. We weren't alone in this fight from the very beginning."

When asked if entering the ministry was something he'd been considering, Kennedy answered, "Yes, it is. It's been weighing on our hearts quite a bit." He added,

There's just something about going out there and being the light.... I think that's a great way of putting it: being the light out in the world like we're supposed to be.

I never wanted to be the big blasting light that blinds you. But I wanted people to be able to see the light through me and by my actions.

He could counsel couples going through tough times: "You see people fighting in their marriages. Maybe we could help with that. And also with kids. Our heart is really with young people."

He explained:

We [he and his wife] did it together. We finished the race, you know, and we kept the faith with God. We kept the faith as Americans and as a married couple.

And if we can make it through something as difficult as this, it kind of makes all the other little things [seem less important].

I think we're being called somewhere.

In *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* he leaves a legacy that is already having an impact on other related cases. According to the Federalist Society, in two recent cases — *Green v. Miss United States of America* and *Waln v. Dysart School District* — the Kennedy decision was cited repeatedly.

The Federalist Society concluded:

Kennedy is likely to have a lasting impact on the jurisprudence of the first three clauses of the First Amendment.

In the Free Exercise Clause context, it synthesized decades of post-Smith cases.

In the Establishment Clause context, it replaced the unsuccessful Lemon test with a test grounded in history and tradition.

In the Free Speech Clause context, it paved the way for increased protection for government employees' private speech, particularly at the intersection of free speech and religious expression.

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