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George Washington's Farewell Address A Warning to Future Generations from the Founding Father George Washington (1732 – 1799)

Read by: John Greenman Language: English Length: 51 minutes Style: Solo

Genre(s): Non-Fiction, Speeches, Political Philosophy

Product Formats and Options				
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After serving two terms as the first president of the United States, George Washington decided not to seek a third term and opted instead to retire and return to private life. He communicated his decision in a public letter that was published as a broadside on September 19, 1796, as "The Address of Gen. Washington to the People of America on his declining the presidency of the United States". Washington used the occasion to share his thoughts and give advice to his "friends and fellow-citizens" on what he believed were the greatest threats to the new republic. Four main themes stand out. First, he urged Americans to put their identity as Americans first and to understand that independence, peace, safety, and prosperity are dependent on the union. Second, he urged the country to give the constitutional government

time to work and commit to altering it only through the process of amendments, and to be wary of obstruction or subversion by factions. Third, he warned of the dangers of political parties, who tend to lord power over others and take revenge on opponents. Fourth, he advised that America seek a position of neutrality and independence in foreign affairs, noting the risk of foreign meddling in domestic affairs as well as the dangers of entanglement in permanent foreign alliances. In addition, he counseled the nation to balance its budget and conserve its credit by avoiding wars and unnecessary borrowing. Washington's "Farewell Address" is often cited in the political arena when the topic turns to foreign policy, the rule of law, the perils of partisanship. It will endure as a timely and timeless fountain of sage advice.

George Washington (February 22,1732 – December 14, 1799) was an American statesman, general and political leader best known as the commander of the military that won independence from England and as first president of the United States. Born into a family of wealthy Virginia landowners, he lacked formal education but learned mathematics, trigonometry and land surveying and displayed a talent for drafting and mapmaking. He was appointed surveyor of Culpepper County in 1748, where he become familiar with the frontier. He joined the Virginia militia in 1752 as the British and French were competing to control the Ohio Valley, resigning his commission in 1758. In 1759 he married Martha Dandridge Custis, widow of a wealthy landowner, and settled into life as a planter and one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. He became active in politics as the British relationship with the colonies soured. When war came, Washington was the natural choice to lead the Continental Army due to his military experience and status as a prominent Virginian. After the war he returned to private life until he was persuaded to attend the Constitutional Convention of 1787 held to revise the Articles of Confederation. Once there he was unanimously elected to preside over the proceedings, which produced the U. S. Constitution. As president, he established a strong, well-financed national government and set many enduring precedents. His Farewell Address is regarded as a model of republicanism, and his eulogy recognized his by describing him as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen".