

## **BCL ep325 Reclaiming Fidelity - Faith, Family, Country: Foundations Worth Fighting For with Robert P. George**

Fidelity is a word that we may not often use, but it is well worth rediscovering. It is a timeless word that captures the importance of our devotion to God, to our families, to our communities, and to our country. Fidelity is what the world needs now more than ever.

As our guest Dr. Robert George will explain, he's even encouraging us to take the month of June to actively seek ways to incorporate fidelity to our families and our schools. Join us for this episode of Base Camp Live. Welcome to another episode of Base Camp Live.

Davies Owens, your host here with you on the journey of raising the next generation. As always, I'm grateful that you've made the decision with the many, many things competing for your time to hit play on that podcast app, to listen to Base Camp Live. It is a joy to be with you each week.

I can't think of anything more important than to be partnering with you to raise up the next generation in a world that continues to spiral into craziness. It's good to be a part of a tradition that really is the way everyone educated up until about 100 years ago in the West, a partnership with our home and our church and our schools. I think it's the most formidable influence we can have to counter so many things that are swirling around us in the world today.

That's why I love what we do. I love seeing how many of you are part of startup schools at the same time I see and talk to schools that are 30 and 40 years old on the classical Christian journey. We are all part of doing something incredibly important and I appreciate when I get to see you and I'm out on the road speaking.

I'm going to see many of you at summer conferences this year at SEL and ACCS. I was just last week as part of the training group with the Herzog Foundation doing a whole series for two and a half days of training on parent partnerships. It's always good to get out and see you, but also I love to hear from you.

So info at Base Camp Live is an easy way to drop an email to me. I would love to hear from you on this particular episode. I want to say a special shout out to the folks at Three Oaks Christian School in Decatur, Indiana.

Head of school Darren Cloper there. Darren, thank you for being a part of the Base Camp Live community along with your teachers and your administrators and your parents. And then special shout out as well today to Knights Christian Academy in New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

Kelly Connolly, head of school there, also a part of Base Camp Live and Zipcast community. Welcome and hello to all of you and thank you for being a part of this great community that we're all a part of raising the next generation. Our guest today is Robert P. George.

Dr. George is one of America's leading Catholic public intellectuals. He is the McCormick

Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton and he directs the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions. He's a former chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and he serves on national and international ethics and civil rights boards.

He holds degrees from Oxford and from Harvard and he's widely honored for his scholarship and his teaching. Dr. George is also a respected author and lecturer and when he's not engaged in teaching and guiding so many people to think more deeply, as he's going to help us today think about this idea of fidelity, you might even find him playing bluegrass on his banjo. Very talented.

We're really excited to have him here on Basecamp Live. Before we jump in, a special word of thanks to our sponsors for this episode. The Classical Academic Press, Life Architects Coaching, Classic Learning Test, and of course Zipcast.

So I encourage you to take a look at [zipcast.media](http://zipcast.media) and the great work that's going on there. Be sure to join us next week. We've got a great episode lined up featuring a conversation with Joanna Hensley, a mom and classical educator.

Together we dig into what I think is one of the biggest challenges many of us are facing, finding balance between life and school in a world that just keeps moving faster. Joanna teaches with our friends and partners at Wilson Hill Academy and they've put together a helpful research page you can check out at [wilsonhillacademy.com/slash Basecamp Live](http://wilsonhillacademy.com/slash/Basecamp%20Live). There's a lot to look forward to next week, but for now let's dive into today's important conversation with Dr. Robert George.

Well, Dr. Robert George, welcome to Basecamp Live. My pleasure, Davies. Thanks for having me on the show.

It's so good to have you here. I love that you are taking on this topic of fidelity and in particular, you've declared June to be Fidelity Month. Before we get into that, what was the impetus behind this desire to put a big spotlight on fidelity? Just about three years ago, it was March, three years ago, I happened to see in the Wall Street Journal an article about some recent surveys that were done that indicated that the belief of our fellow citizens in the importance of religion had significantly declined over the past decade.

Similarly, the belief of our fellow citizens in the importance of the family, marriage and the family, had declined. The belief of our fellow citizens in the importance of patriotism and dedication to one's own country and community had declined. These traditional sources of our unity and strength in the United States were all on the decline.

What was on the increase? There was only one category that it showed Americans think that the item in the category is more important now than they used to think, and that was the importance of money. So I said to myself, look, we've got something wrong here. We've got something upside down and and backwards.

And it struck me as really important, Davies, for this reason. Our national unity and our national strength has never been based on blood or soil or throne or altar. We come from different ethnic backgrounds.

We Americans, we are many different races. We are many different religions. We have many different cultural histories.

We can't locate our strength and unity as you could in some nations on the basis of the bond of an ethnic identity, the bond of a common religion, the bond of a common cultural background. So where do we look for strength and unity? Well, historically, we have looked to, on the one hand, our shared commitment to our constitutional principles, beginning with the principle of the Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal, endowed by their creator with unalienable rights. But then also, Americans across the racial spectrum, across the ethnic spectrum, across the ideological divide, across the political divide, Republicans, Democrats, the religious divide, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Christians, people from the Eastern traditions of faith.

We've all been able to unite around our shared commitments to fidelity to God. We have different faiths, but fidelity to God, under God, is right there in our Pledge of Allegiance. We get it from Abraham Lincoln at the Gettysburg Address, that this nation, he prayed, under God shall have a new birth of freedom.

Government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the So traditionally, our sources of strength have been shared faith in God, fidelity to God. Number two, the shared commitment, doesn't matter whether you're black, white, Catholic, Protestant, male, female, our shared commitment to fidelity in marriage and fidelity to one's family. You take care of your children.

You don't abandon your children. You don't hand your children over to devices to entertain them instead of actually being a mom and being a dad and showing up for the Little League game and the soccer match and so forth. You care about your children's education.

You don't just drop them off someplace and you don't know what's going on in that place. And number three, fidelity to our country and to our local communities, patriotism. So if those have traditionally been our sources, historically been our sources of strength and unity, what are we left with if we allow those to continue to decline? We're left with no sources of strength and unity, and this country will come apart.

Which is what we're seeing. It seems to me time to ring the alarm bell. So by the authority vested in me, Davey, is by absolutely no one.

A few years ago, about this time, I declared June, henceforth and forevermore, to be Fidelity Month, where we Americans would unite across racial lines, across ethnic lines, the political divide, the ideological divide, religion, culture. We're going to reunite to rededicate ourselves to

faith in God, fidelity in marriage in the family, and love of country and community. So that's what Fidelity Month is all about.

And every June, we continue to build Fidelity Month as a time to take stock, rededicate ourselves, join together, do some events together, remind ourselves and remind each other of the importance of fidelity. Well, I think in a world where all these other organizations are gathering around different months, like the month of June to declare Pride Month or whatever they might want to declare, I think it's important to your point that we re-entrench in something that's always been just in the core DNA of our country. I went up and I looked up, I think the March 23 Wall Street Journal poll that you talked about, it is really discouraging.

I mean, 25 years ago, I think was the scope. And then 25 years, religion down 62%, from 62% to 39%. Patriotism, 70% to 38%.

And having children, 59% to 30%. I mean, what? 25 years and that's how far we slid. There you go.

So when you think about the world, of all the words you could have rallied around, I find it interesting you picked the word fidelity. And I started thinking about where, that's not a word you typically hear. You hear maybe the word infidelity perhaps more often today.

And then I said, well, I think of, and I'm dating myself a bit, but you remember the old vinyl records, the LPs, you'd buy a hi-fi system. And that was high fidelity is actually what that technical word was, which is really, fidelity, as I understand, is really kind of a, it's something given to quality or accuracy. So why in particular the word fidelity? I just, I think that's really a powerful word that we've kind of lost as well.

Well, the word simply means faithfulness. So the old hi-fi, the high fidelity recording equipment, they meant that the sound on your record is faithful to the sound you would hear, for example, in the concert hall. You would think if you, if you didn't know better, if your eyes were closed, that you're sitting in the concert hall, but actually you're not sitting in the concert hall with the musicians on the stage.

You're sitting in your living room, listening to a speaker, you know, kind of sound coming out of a sound system with a, with a speaker, high fidelity. Well, that's what we need. We need faithfulness.

We're not going to go anywhere in this country, but down the tubes, unless we remember that our fundamental rights and the duties that follow from those rights are not the gifts of presidents and Kings and parliaments and Congresses or Supreme courts. They're the gift of God, Almighty God. And the reason that those rights are unalienable, can't be taken away, can't even be given away is that they were not given to us by ourselves or by Kings or by presidents or by parliaments.

No merely human power conferred those rights on us. No merely human power may

legitimately take them away. That's a core foundational principle of the American creed, but it only works.

If we have faith in God, if we believe that there is a God, who's concerned about the affairs of and who endows those made in his image with unalienable rights. Similarly, you cannot maintain a society if the fundamental unit, the cell of society, the family based on the marriage of mom and dad collapses. We don't want the society, marriage collapse, they go down the tubes.

It does. And this is where we see all of the, and I've, you know, all the soaring depression rates, anxiety rates, and even in Christian families, there's a, there's a lot of struggle that wasn't there years ago. And I've heard Oz Guinness and others talk about the idea of really, we're living in this really kind of post-Christian moment where we for years have been in this kind of cut flower moment where the flower was long cut, but we had, we had a certain number of decades, perhaps we kind of coasted along on these assumptions of kind of a Judeo-Christian system of grounding.

And it seems like now the flower has completely fallen over and disintegrated and there's a need to kind of replant and go back and own at that deep levels. What I hear you say, like, we've got to, we can't just coast. We got to pick up and dig back into the depth of what grounded this country and our faith from the beginning.

The flower is a very good metaphor. I'll give you another one. The bank capital.

Yeah. We, Christianity, the Judeo-Christian tradition, the biblical tradition, not just the biblical tradition, the classical tradition, because much of our culture has been shaped not just by, by Jerusalem, but also by Athens and Rome. So anyway, the broad tradition of which we're the heirs built up a lot of capital, but that capital is not being replenished.

We've been living off that capital now for decades and the capital's being depleted. And now we see the consequences of allowing the capital to be depleted without rebuilding the capital and replenishing the capital. And you can't replenish the capital except with fidelity, fidelity to God, fidelity to spouses and families, fidelity to country and community, genuine patriotism.

And if we don't, here's the thing, David, if we don't replenish that capital, then what will happen is our society will just fly apart. It's not going to be some external enemy that comes in here and occupies us and conquers us. That's not going to happen.

We're still the strongest military power there is. If we go down the tubes, it's because we did it to ourselves. We allowed it to happen by allowing faith in God to collapse, by allowing the marriage and the family to collapse, to give up on the importance of patriotism and allow everybody to think, well, I'm just in this for myself.

I'm just getting what I can out of this deal. We need to get back to where we were in 1960 when John F. Kennedy could say, my fellow citizens ask not what your country can do for you, ask

what you can do for your country. You say that today, you sound foolish, you sound naive, but we need to create a culture in which that doesn't sound foolish and naive.

That sounds like just ordinary common sense, like a truism. When I love how you frame this too, is it's not, it's not, you're not presenting it as a, as a burdensome, thou shall not, here's another difficult thing you're going to have to go and do. Because most people today live in this, unfortunately, an escapist, frazzled world, and, you know, attention spans have dropped.

Just the, the sense of being busy all the time. And so what I'm hearing is not just, here's one more thing we're going to have to go and do, but here's something beautiful to pick up and do. This idea of re-embracing fidelity is, it should be something that's joyful and beautiful.

And we're going to talk about the practicals in a minute, but maybe speak to that. Cause it's not a, it's not a thou shall not. It is joyful and beautiful.

I mean, there's nothing more beautiful than entering into friendship with God. There's nothing more beautiful than a beautiful marriage and a beautiful family. There's nothing more beautiful than the, than the heartfelt patriotism of a true patriot.

I, when I was a little boy, I would always attend the Memorial Day parade in the little Appalachian village. I grew up in West Virginia and the little Appalachian village of Mount Morris is actually right across the border in Pennsylvania. And I would see those, those veterans, great big men, they were farmers and coal miners and great big men, but they would be filled with emotion, hands over their hearts saying that the Pledge of Allegiance, this wasn't a burden to them.

This was, this was a great and wonderful thing. You know, recently I, um, I direct the James Madison program, American Ideals and Institutions here at Princeton. Recently we hosted as a guest lecturer, the great New York university, a social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt.

Jonathan's a good friend of mine. Now, Jonathan, as he said in the lecture, as he revealed to the audience and didn't hold back, is an atheist and a liberal, but he wanted to report what his scholarly research in social psychology reveals. Guess what it is.

You know who the happiest people are? Those crazy Christian married people. Yes. Deep religious faith and conservative views.

He said, as a matter of fact, he said, even though I'm an atheist, he happens to be of a Jewish background, he says, even though I'm an atheist, my wife and I and our family have joined a synagogue in New York. My children to have the benefits in terms of joyfulness of happiness of, uh, he says, you know, I find the services boring, but I do it for my kids. So, uh, you know, I have a different attitude.

Uh, we're a liberal, but, um, but you know, John is willing to tell the truth and I give an enormous amount of credit for that. So this is not a burden. What I'm calling for far from being

a burden, it's quite the opposite.

It's a joy. This is not, this is not a negative thing. We're not, we're not against something.

I mean, there are plenty of things I happen to be against and lots of things I have before, but fidelity month is not a month against this or that bad thing. There are lots of bad things. We should oppose them.

Fidelity month is for three, very, very good things. Faith in God, marriage and the family, patriotism and community. Those let's take a quick break on come back.

Cause I want to, I want to walk through those and unpack just some specific examples of how do we model that? How do we live that out? Because that is absolutely the calling that we need to be pursuing with everything we've got. We'll take a quick break and be right back. Hi, this is Dr. Christopher Perrin with Classical Academic Press.

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I want to take just a moment during our break and let you know about the great work that's being done by Wilson Hill Academy. They offer a vibrant, rich and accredited classical Christian education available to families and schools almost anywhere. With a click of a button, students join master teachers and friends live online from all over the world to engage in deep and lively discussion, solve math problems, conduct science experiments, translate Latin, deliver thesis presentations and so much more.

At Wilson Hill, students make lifelong friends and graduate well-prepared for college and beyond. Discover what's possible for your family or school at [wilsonhillacademy.com](http://wilsonhillacademy.com). Dr. George, I love your reminder to us that this is not meant to be something burdensome. Let me add that to the to-do list today as I run around in my busy life.

Let me add fidelity, one more thing to think about. It should just be a part of our DNA and the air we breathe. I'm sure everybody listening, most listening are classical Christian folks who would say, yes, we agree.

We need more of that. But then it comes down to just how do we prioritize these things in our life? What do we look to, especially if maybe we've, like so many folks today, I'm always thinking about the Pew came out with a study that said about 30% of millennial Gen Zers don't live within a hundred mile radius of their extended family. So this idea of generational wisdom is not as easy as it once was, where you just followed in the footsteps of the norms of your, of your family.

If your grandfather was a veteran and went in the parade, you probably would have seen the parade if you live near your grandfather, but that's not the moment we're in today. So walk us through just some practical ways we can live this out. All right.

Number one, in my experience as a teacher, I've been in the professor business for about four decades. I've learned something important, which is that what you say with your mouth, your words is very important. You can't not use words.

If you want to teach people, you do need to do that, but there's something even more important than what you say with your words. There's something even more important when it comes to teaching than precepts. And that is the example you set.

If I set for my students, the example of what it means to do, to be a determined, dedicated truth seeker, and a courageous truth speaker, who's willing to say the truth as God gives me to see the truth, even when it's unpopular. Well, my students will model that will emulate that. They will become determined truth seekers and courageous truth speakers.

So parents, coaches, pastors, grandparents, aunties, uncles, anybody who is anywhere within a hundred miles of young people do talk, do teach by precept, but even more importantly, set the example. Now, what are we talking about specifically when it comes to Fidelity Month? It's not just that you should be a Christian or a member of whatever faith. It's not only that you should be a member of your faith.

You should be the best member of your faith you can be. Keep striving to be a better Christian in the way you lead your life, a better disciple of Jesus, a better walker in the way of Jesus. Now, sometimes that comes down to really straightforward things.

If you're not going to church, what kind of example, honestly, you may say you're a Christian, may read the Bible, may say your night prayers, your meal prayers, but if you're not getting there to worship with the ecclesia, with the Christian community, come on now, let's get to church. That can be a joyful thing. That doesn't have to be a burden.

If you can't get to church every Sunday, at least try to be there from time to time. Get there at least once a month, ideally every Sunday, but at least try to be there once a month. Contribute to the church, and I mean not just money.

Yes, do your tithes, but make some contribution. Let your kids see you making some contribution of your time to the church. If you're given the gift of being a good teacher or apologist, teach Sunday school or teach adult catechism or something like that.

There are concrete things you can do to lead a better Christian life, a better religious life. Fidelity calls on that. It's not just believe.

Yes, believe, important. It's a precondition of everything else, but you have to do more than believe. Same with marriage and the family.



If you think, I'm a faithful husband because I don't cheat on my wife. I don't have adulterous affairs. Well, that's great.

You do not have adulterous affairs. That's an absolute baseline, but it's merely a baseline. How can I be a more faithful husband? That means how can I better serve my wife? After all, marriage is a vocation.

A vocation means serving. It's something we do to serve. In marriage, spouses serve each other and the children who are the beautiful fruit of their marriage.

How can I be a better father? Or if I'm a female, how can I be a better wife? How can I be a better mother? Fidelity comes in degrees. It's not just it's not just you're not having affairs. You're faithful.

No, you can be not having affairs and be a pretty darn faithless, useless husband. You don't want to be that. You want to be a good husband, fulfilling your vocation, serving your wife and the beautiful children that she gave you.

For wife, same thing for your husband and those children that are gifts of God to you. Same thing with country and community. Patriotism has to go beyond just feelings, feelings of love of country.

What am I doing? Am I being a good citizen? Am I voting? Am I keeping myself informed about matters of public affairs? Am I keeping a critical perspective, not a tribal one? I believe what my party says and I'm against what the other party says. No, you have a critical perspective of a true citizen of a constitutional republic. You can be involved in political campaigns for candidates you do believe in or campaigns for causes.

I've always been heavily involved in the pro-life cause. We need more people involved in the pro-life cause, the pro-marriage cause. That issue is coming back.

We can restore the institution of marriage. We need activism in the cause and same in the ordinary affairs of a community. Be a contributing member of your community.

Don't just be a taker, also be a giver. That's how you're more faithful. Fidelity is, again, not just either or, it's more and less.

You want to be more faithful to God, to spouses, to your kids, to your community and your country. Well, all of them together, I've heard you talk about Edmund Burke and the idea of the little platoons. I thought that was a great analogy or a visual picture of what you just described.

Talk about that image a bit. So, Burke introduces the concept of the institutions of civil society. Burke was a great 18th century British parliamentarian.

He was actually Irish, but a British parliamentarian, a politician and a wonderful political theorist, a great thinker. He's considered one of the fathers of conservatism, although he was

himself not a member of the Conservative Party, which came to be known as the Tory Party, but rather a member of the Whig Party, which is sometimes thought of as the Liberal Party. Anyway, Burke's basic idea is this.

So, we've got institutions of government and they're very, very important. You have an executive branch here in the United States. We separate our executive branch and our legislative branch and indeed our judicial branch.

But in any country, you've got the people who execute the law and you've got the people who make the law. Then you have the people who interpret the law and apply the law in cases of disputes. We call those judges and justices.

And those institutions of government, of the civic order are very important. But they're not the most fundamental institutions of society. They are not the institutions that play the most basic role in providing health, education and welfare to people and who play the primary role in transmitting to each new generation the values and virtues that will enable members of that generation to lead successful lives and to be contributing members of the community.

You know which institutions provide those goods, those services? Not the institutions of government, the little platoons of civil society, the family, the church or religious community, the neighborhood association, the library group, the PTA, the little league. It's mom and dad and grandma and grandpa and auntie and uncle and coach and pastor and teacher and on and on. Not people exercising or wielding the power of government.

Private people in a certain sense, private in the sense of not being governmental, but yet performing a massively important public function, transmitting virtue, providing the basic resources of education, of health, of well-being. And it's very important, once we recognize with Burke how critical the institutions of civil society are, it's important for us to remind government to stay in its lane. Do not interfere with a family.

It's the family that has the fundamental right and obligation to direct the upbringing and education of children. People in the classical education community know this more than anybody does, except maybe the homeschoolers. The homeschoolers and the classical ed people, they know the importance of making sure government doesn't come in and interfere with the rights of parents to decide how their children are going to be educated and how they're going to be brought up.

Government's got to stay in its lane. The little platoons, the institutions of civil society have their fundamental rights, their zones of authority, and they've got to be respected. Does that answer the question, Dan? Dan Jones It absolutely does.

I think that's really helpful. And you're right, we're in a culture today that celebrates disconnect from your family of origin and individualism, and ultimately outsourcing to big government or whoever else to come in and take over. Yeah.

And it's real- that's not the way to protect liberty. Dr. John SantaLucia That's right. Dan Jones  
And I think- Dr. John SantaLucia Liberty, protect the institutions of civil society.

Dr. John SantaLucia Yeah. Well, I think that's the- to the point of our audience that are very involved in classical education, not only affording that prioritization, the in loco parentis, that we're doing this with the family. You're not paying us to take your kids all day and come pick them up later.

In fact, we're trying- a lot of what we talk about on this podcast is what does this look like to lock arms and raise a generation together with the church, kind of the holy trifacta, as I like to call it. So why don't we take a quick break, because I'd love to come back and just end with some of your thoughts on, again, practical ways that we can implement this idea of fidelity in our homes. And I think uniquely as classical Christian people, you were talking before about mentoring and heroes.

There's so many heroes of old that we get to discover through great books and the liberal arts tradition that really, I think, further entrenched that understanding and value for fidelity. I'd love your thoughts on that. Let's take a quick break and we'll come right back.

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CLT's assessments for grades three through 12 provide a meaningful metric of students' abilities, equipping parents and educators, and helping students pursue a fulfilling future. Explore CLT's assessments by visiting [www.cltextam.com](http://www.cltextam.com) forward slash Basecamp. Dr. George, I know as an intellectual yourself and the value that you see being in there at Princeton and in most of your professional life in the academy, the importance of deep, thoughtful, critical thinking and reading, and obviously one of the great blessings of the liberal arts tradition is I like to describe as we can get in these little time machines called books and go back and sit at the feet of great thinkers and awaken us to lives that are well-lived and emulating before our children stories of people we hope that they will want to someday be like.

So talk about, I'm sure you agree and I'd love your thoughts on how does fidelity in classical education may be linked together in your mind. Well, you want to learn about the actual content of fidelity. Look at the life, for example, of George Washington.

Look at the life of Frederick Douglass. Read St. Augustine's Confessions. Read Plato's Apology.

Learn what you can about the Renaissance, the flowering of learning and the creation of the first universities in the Middle Ages. Learn about the issues that arose in that period later on that we call the Enlightenment. The more you learn about history, the more you read about the great thinkers and the great figures of history, the leaders, the statesmen, the scholars, the intellectuals, the clergy, the saints, the heroes, the deeper your understanding of moral things is going to be.

So this is what I love most about the classical education movement. I'm pushing it at the higher ed level, but it can't begin there. It's got to begin really K-12.

There's no point that it's too early for kids to start learning about, for example, the life of George Washington, which was a life of fidelity and courage and constancy, a life of patriotism, a life of sacrifice for the sake of causes bigger than oneself. That's what Washington's life was all about. Now, Davies, we all know that every single human being, including George Washington, is made out of the same flesh and blood, skin and bone as the rest of us.

They're going to have their faults. Today, though, we seem to be emphasizing the faults of the great people of history instead of trying to understand them in their times. We're emphasizing their faults.

And it's okay. It's okay to take cognizance of their faults. You want the whole truth to be told, but you got to not neglect their virtues, especially the ones that can be such great role models, not only for our children, but for us ourselves.

You want to be great, model yourself on George Washington. That doesn't mean you have to believe everything he believed, but you should acknowledge and understand and try to emulate his virtues, his courage, his constancy, his patriotism, those kinds of factors. And absolutely.

And I think, again, I'm always coming across statistics, of course, you have to take them with a grain of salt. But even if you read something like a study on Google recently, that 70% of teenagers are on YouTube and they say they relate more to YouTube creators than traditional celebrities. And you look at just the rise of social media influencers.

And so, we have generations now that are being brought up like the highest, virtuous person they want to emulate is somebody with far more foibles and faults than George Washington would have had any day of the week. And yet we've discredited the greats and we've elevated the fools. And then we wonder why we're in the mess we're in.

So, I love, again, this idea of putting these books that have transcended time and certainly anchoring to the biblical truths behind all of that. But anyway, yeah, please. I think we need to study the lives and the thought of the great figures like Washington or Frederick Douglass or Plato and people like that.

But we can also learn a great deal from the great works of fiction. You learn a lot about virtue from reading Jane Austen's works, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*. Those are all about virtues and vices.

You learn a lot reading 19th century American literature, reading authors like Hawthorne. You certainly learn an enormous amount about important issues in human life by reading Shakespeare. It's not just entertaining.

It is entertaining, wonderfully entertaining. But there's a point. There's a point beyond the entertainment.

There's genuine, deep wisdom in those writings. We're going all the way back reading, for example, the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, reading the works of Homer, reading Sophocles' *Antigone*. That one might not even be known to the classical school community that widely.

But the wonderful work by the ancient Greek writer Sophocles called the *Antigone* contains all sorts of important lessons about moral conflicts people can find themselves in, where obedience to the law is on the one side, but important virtues such as piety are on the other side. How do we wrestle with those conflicting obligations? There's so much to be learned from great works of literature. Well, and as you described, sometimes we learn from the failures and foibles of poor decision making as well.

It's not just, a lot of times, Christians will look at our schools and think, why are we reading a book about a pagan? Why are we reading *Great Gatsby*? That guy was a fool. Well, yeah, we don't want to be like him. Let's go find more virtuous people.

A lot of wealth fidelity. One of the great things about Christianity is it's embraced truth wherever it can find it. It's a great thing.

We're not tribal. I mean, at our best, some Christians will fall into tribalism. But the right attitude is if truth is out there, it's God's truth.

And if we find it in Plato, who didn't know about the God of the Bible, that doesn't make it any less true. We learn from Plato. St. Augustine learned so much from the classical thinkers, the pagan thinkers.

St. Thomas Aquinas, probably the greatest theologian of all of Christian history, learned so much from Aristotle, whose works have been recovered shortly before figures like Aquinas were writing. The truth is the truth, and wherever we find it, it's God's truth, and we go for it. I love it.

And in the process, we rediscover the importance of fidelity in our families and our schools. Well, I love this conversation. As we close out our time, point some people in if they want to know more.

I know there's the website [fidelitymonth.com](http://fidelitymonth.com). I assume that's the best place to get to learn about this important month. Please, if you're interested at all in being part of our movement, and it really is a movement, and it's a grassroots movement, it's not directed top down, we don't have a budget. As I say, I mean, absolutely no one declared Fidelity Month.

But go there, adopt our logo in June on your social media accounts, use our beautiful Fidelity Month logo with a myrtle leaf, the wreath of the myrtle leaf, which is the symbol historically of fidelity. Talk to your pastor about giving a homily that mentions Fidelity Month and encourages people in these virtues. Maybe have an event at your church or at your community center, a speaker on some aspect of fidelity.

It could be a talk on patriotism. It could be a talk on marriage and the family. It could be a catechetical sort of talk.

Your mayor, ask your mayor to recognize Fidelity Month with some sort of a town declaration. Your representative in your state legislature, your congressman, read a statement recognizing Fidelity Month into the legislative record. Just bring Fidelity Month to the attention of your fellow citizens in any way you can think of doing it.

And there's some concrete advice about things you can do on the [fidelitymonth.com](http://fidelitymonth.com) website. Great. Sounds like a great resource.

And I know of your many writings and resources on your website as well, I guess, Robert P. George. My website is [robertpgeorge.com](http://robertpgeorge.com). If people are interested in my general work, you can follow me on Twitter. You can just type my name, Robert P. for Peter, Robert P. George, or my technical Twitter handle is at [McCormickProf](https://twitter.com/McCormickProf).

But if you do just on the question box in Twitter, you can find me, Robert P. George. You're definitely out there. Well, I appreciate your time.

Dr. George, it's great to connect with you and hear your passion and giving us some both encouragement, but also just to challenge us to really lean in on this importance of recapturing fidelity in a world that desperately needs it. Thank you for your encouragement. Well, Davis, thank you for having me on the show.

And God bless you. And God bless the work that you and the whole classical school movement are doing. Couldn't be more critical.

Send me and my colleagues in the university world more classically educated young men and women, please. We'll do that. Well, we'd love to flood Princeton with just- Do it.

Many, many of our young, well, and they're most qualified. I'm confident of that. So thank you for all the work you do.

We'll definitely love to continue future conversations with you. Thanks so much. Well, you did it.

You stayed till the very end of the podcast. Thanks so much for listening to this conversation. And a special thanks to our sponsors who make this episode possible.

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It's always InfoBase Camp Live. What's on your mind? Help us tell stories that may be reflective of what you've seen impacting in your personal life or as a teacher in your school of what classical Christian education is doing, again, around the world. We appreciate you as a faithful listener.

Hey, we're going to be back again next week for another episode. Please join us. We wouldn't want you to miss.