

# Humility: An Unlikely Biography of America's Greatest Virtue

David J. Bobb

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### **Humility: An Unlikely Biography of America's Greatest Virtue**

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Humility: An Unlikely Biography of America's Greatest Virtue David J. Bobb There is no formula for becoming humble--not for individuals, and not for nations.

Benjamin Franklin's dilemma--one he passed on to the young United States--was how to achieve both greatness and humility at once. The humility James Madison learned as a legislator helped him to mold a nation, despite his reputation as a meek, timid, and weak man. The humility of Abigail Adams fed her impossible resilience. Humility of all kinds is deeply ingrained in our American DNA. Our challenge today is to rediscover and reawaken this utterly indispensable, alarmingly dormant national virtue before it's too late.

In *Humility: An Unlikely Biography of America's Greatest Virtue*, Dr. David J. Bobb traces the "crooked line" that is the history of humility in political thought. From Socrates to Augustine to Machiavelli to Lincoln, passionate opinions about the humble ruler are literally all over the map. Having shown classical, medieval, and Christian ideas of humility to be irreconcilable, Dr. Bobb asserts that we as a nation are faced with a difficult choice. A choice we cannot put off any longer.

"The power promised by humility is power over oneself, in self-government," says Dr. Bobb. "[But] humility's strength is obscured by the age of arrogance in which we live."

George Washington's humility, as great as it was, cannot substitute for ours today. We must reintegrate this fundamental virtue if there is to be an American future. The rediscovery of humility's strength awaits.

#### **Humble Praise for Humility**

"Humility is essential to good character--and to our country. In this smart and lively book, David Bobb illustrates this virtue with the stories of five great Americans. And he reminds us that humility is at the core of our national creed of equality and liberty."

"Bobb's book is countercultural in the best sense of the word." --Peter Augustine Lawler, Dana Professor of Government, Berry College

"David Bobb has done us a wonderful service in writing a 'biography' of the idea of humility, providing a double example of humility in practice by drawing our attention to the essential humility of our greatest leaders and thinkers. Young readers will profit from the superb character instruction, while older readers can avail themselves of a mid-course correction!" --Steven F. Hayward, Professor of Conservative Thought and Policy, University of Colorado, Boulder; author, The Age of Reagan

"This book ably demonstrates that humility is a precondition for healthy pride and true greatness of soul. His finely-crafted portraits of great Americans will be of interest to thoughtful citizens and seasoned students of American politics alike." --Daniel J. Mahoney, Augustine Chair in Distinguished Scholarship, Assumption College

"Organized around the most undervalued and overlooked of the virtues required for republican self-government, David Bobb's discerning study illuminates the pursuit of individual and collective political action from ancient to modern times." --Herman Belz, Professor of History Emeritus, University of Maryland

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