

## "More than Strength"

To begin on the first campaign of *Soldier Boy*, let me say what has been so often said about courage or strength: it is not being fearless in the face of danger but it is acting with fear in the face..."

**"The battle, sir, is not to be the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave."**

**- Patrick Henry**

Well, as some redress of my early academics, Patrick Henry was indeed a patriot; thus, he knew of sacrifice and struggle against superior strength (i.e. The British Empire). Even before the revolution, he endured much failure in his personal and professional life.

As documented in Wikipedia, Patrick failed in a business as a first career; only to see his marriage gift, a farm, be destroyed around 1757. Another attempt in business led to yet another failure and, with that, the decision to enter law. As often the case, his law practice eventually led to politics such that, by 1765, he was elected to the legislature of the then colony, Virginia,

Days following his election, Patrick introduced a bill called the Virginia Stamp Act Resolution - which notably contained treasonous content. As a post-view of his action, the content (or Act) was a representation of his **passion** concerning the rule of Great Britain over the colonies. At its core, this legislation was thought to have spurred the colonies into The Revolution in 1775.

On the eve of revolt, Patrick was thought to have made the famous statement: "give me liberty or give me death." Ironically, this statement was made in a church; but what may seem confounding in our modern culture, is that Patrick was a slave owner. It hardly seems reasonable that he could be such an advocate for freedom with slaves working his property - but that was a different time...

After serving in the war as a colonel in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Regiment, he continued in his political profession as an Antifederalist. Once again in my limited knowledge, the Antifederalist represented opposition to a strong centralized government in view of each state's sovereign

rights; too much centralized government would resemble in not regulate to a autocracy or monarchy (like England). He opposed the Constitution on the basis that it gave too much power to the federal government; and second, he supported the Bill of Rights to offset or amend that power. We could probably use him today for similar concerns of growing, centralized government!

In his position and politic, Patrick was said to have predicted the eventual Civil War on the observation that Virginia was exceeding its jurisdiction under the Constitution; but he was probably not alone in predicting the inevitable war.

In some effort to define or describe the presented quote, consider described words of "vigilant", "active", and "brave". Where do these words - or what do each represent - apply in victory or success? For that matter, what is victory or success?

We have heard in passing that victory or winning is not giving-up...or giving-in - but the most obvious definition is beating the opposition.

The problem with victory and winning is that, while it may result in beating the opposition, it always involves injury and destruction (in the context of war). Even in human struggles of disease and other disadvantages however, a somewhat war or struggle is carried out with similar possibilities and outcome. It seems that victory has a price and is sometimes - in not always - dependent on how much the combatant or involved is willing to spend or exhaust.

Patrick Henry had such **passion** for liberty that he may not have truly considered the costs in view of opponent's strength and resolve. If his words were true of his character, his life was no issue for liberty or freedom; he was ready to fight to the death if necessary.

"Vigilant" means to be on guard or ready - as does "active"; and we know what "brave" means. In examining these words and Patrick Henry's story, I must be reminded of the deep question of life: "is there anything in my life worth dying for?" If the answer is "no", than I have ignored and disregarded the sacrifice of so many.