

It's Okay to be Different

Zachary Taylor is by far, one of the most obscure men to ever ascend to the highest office in the United States. Zachary Taylor was elected the 12th President of the United States with 1,360,099 million people casting their votes for him with 163 electoral votes. He took office on March 5th of 1849, and would only serve in this role for 16 months. President Taylor was a veteran of the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War, the Second Seminole War, and the Mexican American War. His name became a household name in the Mexican War rising to the rank of General. He was elected as the Presidential nominee for the Whig Party in 1848, though he was extremely reluctant to accept the Whig Party nomination. The 'Democratic-Republican' party that was founded by Andrew Jackson was split into pieces. The Whig Party was looking for someone to control that had a reputable name, and Taylor was the one who fit their mantra, but he wouldn't follow in their ways.

Zachary Taylor was quite the independent man and thinker, which allowed him to be quite successful in the military ranks. One reason the Whig Party wanted him on their ticket, along with the less than exciting Millar Filmore, was because he fit the image they wanted to portray. Washington, Jackson, and Old Tippacano were all military veterans and were idolized by many. It was a way to get votes so that the once inexperienced President (no prior political experience whatsoever), reached the oval office, they could step in and turn him into a puppet. Much to their surprise, President Taylor was quite okay with being different. While Taylor's Father served as a lieutenant colonel under George Washington in the Revolutionary war (and was given 6,000 acres of land as compensation for his service), President Taylor was not the same person as his father. Again, not afraid to stand out from the status quo of the era. Taylor was plain in dress, blunt in speech, but strong ideas on how he thought the country was to move forward. One of his issues was that some of the decisions he made to stick to his own personal ideals, led the young country even closer to the civil war. And to be frank, Millard Filmore didn't help matters when he ascended to the office after President Taylor's untimely death.

One can argue though, that because of President Taylor's untimely death, more compromises were made in the halls of congress that many historians look back on and claim that President Taylor would've vetoed the compromises on slavery if he had lived. The bottom line is that we'll never know. Zachary Taylor never lived at a 'fixed address', always going and serving when and where his country called him. He had never voted in an election and never registered to vote. He wasn't interested in politics, but he was interested in becoming a small catalyst for change. Many 'what ifs' are said about Zachary Taylor. But you have an incredible opportunity as you begin a new week. You can make the 'what ifs' that you may be dealing with in your mind realities, all for the Glory of God. I believe that we were created by God to be different. Like President Taylor, we will make mistakes. But I encourage you not to try to fit yourself into anyone else's mold today. Whether that be a beloved parent, mentor, or best friend.

Be you and who God made you to be. After all, His Word tells us that you are beautifully and wonderfully made. In Genesis 1:27, the Bible even says we are made in the image of God. As you start your day, begin a new week, I want to encourage you to cling to being a difference maker for Christ. Not a cookie cutter Christian. Let me leave you with Romans 12:1-2, 'I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'

-Rev. R. Brady Henderson

