



Stonewall Jackson's Book of Maxims

James Robertson Jr.

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Thomas J. Jackson never sought fame, but he could not escape its light when opportunity came.

Jackson was very much a man of his time, and he was not alone in this quest for personal development, but he was an earnest man with an iron resolve. Such personal discipline served him particularly well during the war that divided North and South. Although he was fatally wounded by friend fire on May 2, 1863, Jackson has continued to live in the national memory and to fascinate Americans with his remarkable achievements against incredible odds. His sobriquet "Stonewall" remains the most famous nickname in American military history.

The manner in which Jackson lived his life was heavily influenced by the popular writings of Lord Chesterfield, whose published letters to his son on self-improvement were well known in polite society. No single work - save the Bible - more influenced Jackson in his personal evolution. While he was a cadet at West Point, he began collecting maxims as part of his quest for status as a gentleman. In the mid-1850s he carefully inscribed these maxims in a personal notebook, which disappeared after his death in 1863. Subsequent generations assumed that this notebook was a casualty of time, but in the 1990s, during his research for a biography of Jackson, James I. Robertson Jr. discovered the long-lost book of maxims in the archives of Tulane University.

Jackson's maxims are reproduced here as he wrote them. Accompanying each are insights into the man. *Stonewall Jackson's Book of Maxims* includes:

- The origin of the adage
- One or more quotations that parallel the maxim
- How Jackson may have applied the idea in his own life
- How certain maxims offer insights into the mind of the man

These timeless insights offer as much to individuals today as they did when Jackson strove to integrate them into his life.

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