

Why I'm Not Upset With Mitt Romney

Before you crucify me for not condemning "the traitor," please hear me out. My position has nothing to do with whether I agree with Romney's "guilty" vote on the first article of impeachment. And it has nothing to do with whether I believe he is a true conservative. Or even a loyal Republican, for that matter. It has to do with something far deeper. Are you willing to hear me out?

I'm quite aware of the litany of charges against Mitt Romney's past political record and business dealings (see [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)). And I'm quite aware that this track record would seem to clash directly with Senator Romney's deep Mormon faith.

I'm also quite aware of Romney's very public attacks on Trump since 2016.

In other words, I write what I write with my eyes wide open.

And with my eyes wide open, I take Mitt Romney at his word.

I believe him when he says he agonized over his decision.

I believe him when he says he took his oath before God seriously.

I believe him when he speaks of sleepless nights.

I believe him when he talks of wanting to act with integrity for the sake of his children and grandchildren.

The bottom line is that God alone knows what is in Mitt Romney's heart, and it is not up to you or me to pass judgment on why he (or anyone else) did what he did. We can categorically differ with his decisions. But we cannot judge

his motivations.

On a purely practical level, what Romney did will be far more destructive to his political career. And he certainly doesn't need to write a bestselling, anti-Trump book to make himself extra money.

Romney has subjected himself to isolation within his own party. He has likely doomed any future political plans. And he has guaranteed that he will be hated and vilified by millions of loyal Trump supporters in the years ahead.

That's why I'm not upset with him for voting his conscience, since I genuinely believe that's exactly what he did.

Ironically, the very people who will believe President Trump when he speaks of the motivations behind his Ukraine phone call will not believe Senator Romney when he speaks of the motivations behind his vote.

Really now, do you believe his private meetings with journalists and broadcasters and his talks with other senators were all an act and a sham? Or are you that sure that he was so consumed by bitterness toward Trump that he used this as a lasting "gotcha" moment?

Writing for *The Atlantic*, McKay Coppins states that Romney said to him, "This has been the most difficult decision I have ever had to make in my life."

Coppins explains, "For weeks, the senator from Utah had sat silently in the impeachment trial alongside his 99 colleagues, reviewing the evidence at night and praying for guidance. The gravity of the moment weighed on him, as did the pressure from members of his own party to acquit their leader. As his conscience tugged at him, he said, the exercise took on a spiritual dimension."

He continues, "According to Romney's interpretation of

Alexander Hamilton's treatise on impeachment in 'Federalist No. 65'—which he says he's read 'multiple, multiple times'—Trump's attempts to enlist the Ukrainian president in interfering with the 2020 election clearly rose to the level of 'high crimes and misdemeanors.'"

This would be in harmony with the tweet of Georgetown law professor Randy Barnett, who said, "Before anyone condemns @SenatorRomney for his vote, they should listen to his 9 minute explanation of why he voted as he did. This wasn't an easy vote for him to make politically, and it's possible to have a good faith disagreement about this issue—in particular, on Article 1."

Again, I disagree with Romney's conclusion. And, I believe that, from Day One, the impeachment process was part of a multiyear witch hunt to take down the president. I've made that clear before.

I simply take Romney at his word in terms of how he came to make his decision, and that is something I must respect.

Coppins notes that "when the senator invited me to his Capitol Hill office yesterday [Feb. 4], I was unsure what he would reveal. Romney had been largely silent throughout the impeachment proceedings, giving little indication of which way he was leaning. I half-expected to find a cowed and calculating politician ready with a list of excuses for caving. (His staff granted the interview on the condition that it would be embargoed until he took to the Senate floor.)

"Instead, I found Romney filled with what seemed like righteous indignation about the president's misconduct—quoting hymns and Scripture, expressing dismay at his party and bracing for the political backlash."

Romney even claims that he wanted Bolton to testify with "the hope that he would be able to say something exculpatory and create reasonable doubt, so I wouldn't have to vote to

convict.”

And I take the senator at his word.

Watch his nine-minute speech for yourself and come to your own conclusions, remembering that we will be judged the way we judge others.

As for you judging me for even writing this article, bear in mind that I’m not a Mormon. In fact, I reject Mormonism as a non-Christian cult that distorts the Scriptures. And I view Joseph Smith as a false prophet.

But if Mitt Romney genuinely felt that, for the sake of integrity and in harmony with his faith, he had to vote “guilty” on the first article of impeachment, I will respect that.

In the end, that’s the best any of us can do: make careful decisions in the fear of God.

History may condemn Romney (or vindicate him). He will likely pay a high price for his vote. And, overall, he will most probably be a very small footnote in a very big, messy drama.

And, to repeat, I disagree with his vote, and I disagree with his religious beliefs.

But I don’t despise him for what he did.