**Benjamin Franklin**

Exact contemporary of Jonathan Edwards

**Comparison & Contrast of Franklin Versus Edwards**

**Similarities**

1. Edwards and Franklin's beliefs are the root of every other thing they accomplished in their lives.

2. Although both men believed in completely different theories, they both lived by a high moral code.
   - Franklin listed out his highest virtues in *The Autobiography* and systematically tried to master every one.
   - Edwards wrote out his *Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards* that expressed his conviction on how one should live.

3. Both men tried to better themselves due to their strong beliefs.
   - Franklin charted his success in following his list of virtues and engaging in rigorous self-examination.
   - Edwards read his Resolutions once a week and also engaged in rigorous self-examination.

4. Both men also shared their beliefs with others.
   - Edwards - his writings and sermons expressed his beliefs and convictions.
   - Franklin
     o His "proverbs" and "maxims" were stated outright in *Poor Richard's Almanac*.
     o His maxims and values permeated all of his writings.

5. Franklin and Edwards' convictions were their motivations for their work.
   - They both STRONGLY believed that a person is called by God to serve mankind.

6. Edwards and Franklin were highly driven to succeed with a strong sense of purpose.

7. Both men had a Puritan work ethic instilled in them.

**Differences**

1. Franklin, who was a deist, believed that everything could be solved by reason.
   - Edwards was a Calvinist. He believed in predestination and the spiritual power of God.

2. Franklin was engaged in worldly concerns. He was mostly motivated by a happy life on Earth.
   - Edwards was more concerned with life after death. He was motivated by his religion and the spiritual power of God.

3. Franklin was a part of The Age of Enlightenment.
   - Edwards was involved in The Great Awakening. This was the last attempt to revive Puritanism.

**A Traditional view of the Contrast between the two is:**

- Edwards points back to Puritan Past
- Franklin points to the Future

**Benjamin's Life**

In summary: D Boston to Philadelphia to London to Philadelphia to London to France to Philadelphia...

**Benjamin's Writings**

He used Pseudonyms often!

- Silence Dogood Letters
- Poor Richard's Almanac - Richard Saunders

As a Writer, He is Characterized

- by being a man who knew how to put words together with wit and irony!
- by being a writer whose writing oozed with his values and beliefs

**The Autobiography**

Includes His List of Virtues

Daily Schedule

**Letter to Ezra Stiles**

His statement of Creed was written in his Letter to Ezra Stiles

**Abigail Adams**

The most prolific letter writer in America

Her letters chronicle life in the colonies as they become a new nation

Fascinating family!