

A President on His Knees

Ronald Wilson Reagan was president of the United States from 1981 to 1989. Prior to his presidency, he served as the 33rd governor of California (1967 – 1975), and was a radio, film and television actor.

On March 30, 1981 – only 69 days into his new administration, Reagan, his press secretary James Brady, Washington police officer Thomas Delahanty, and Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy were struck by gunfire from would-be assassin John Hinckley Jr. outside the Washington Hilton Hotel.



Although close to death upon arrival at George Washington University Hospital, Reagan was stabilized in the emergency room, then underwent emergency exploratory surgery. He recovered and was released from the hospital on April 11, becoming the first serving U.S. president to survive being shot in an assassination attempt. Reagan believed God had spared his life so that he might go on to fulfill a greater purpose.

Reagan died of pneumonia, complicated by Alzheimer's disease, at his home in Bel Air Calif., on the afternoon of June 5, 2004. He was 93 years old.

At his state funeral, the story was told of the time Reagan was in the hospital recovering from the attempt on his life. An aide entering the room was alarmed to find the president on hands and knees, wiping up some water he had spilled from the sink.

"Mr. President!" exclaimed the aide. "We have people for this."

Reagan simply replied that he didn't want the nurses getting into trouble because of water on the bathroom floor.

Few people get to meet a sitting (or kneeling) president, but even fewer of us know a genuinely humble soul. As human beings, we're proud and self-centered by nature, and humility is an unnatural trait. Humility is something that is gained and practiced as we grow in wisdom and grace.

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Sometimes the Lord has to use circumstances in life to foster humility in our hearts. If you're facing a situation right now that wasn't planned and isn't desirable, perhaps God means to use it for good in your heart. Maybe He is teaching you to trust Him, to lean on Him, to follow His way and not your own or to confess to Him your self-sufficiency and self-centeredness.

The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way (Psalm 25:9).

– Beecher Hunter