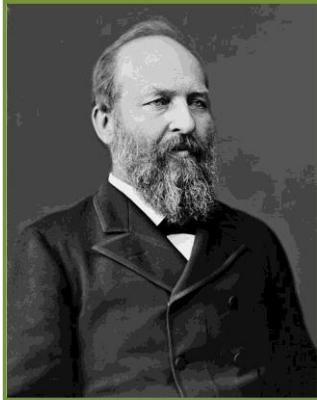


Garfield's Principles

James Abram Garfield (1831 – 1881) served as the 20th president of the United States after completing nine consecutive terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. His accomplishments as president included a controversial resurgence of presidential authority above senatorial courtesy in executive appointments, energizing U.S. naval power, and purging corruption in the Postal Service.



Garfield appointed several African Americans to prominent federal positions. The scholar president, he successfully managed a national debt crisis without having to call a special session of Congress. A self-made man who came from a modest background, he was raised in obscurity on an Ohio farm by his widowed mother and brothers. He served as a major general in the Union Army during the Civil War, and fought in the battles of Shiloh and Chickamauga. Garfield's presidency lasted just 200 days – from March 4, 1881, until his death on Sept. 19, 1881, as a result of being shot by assassin Charles J. Guiteau on July 2, 1881.

When Garfield was a youth, an elderly friend gave him a set of personal principles that he cherished to the end of his life. The guide read:

- Never be idle.
- Make few promises.
- Always speak the truth.
- Live within your income.
- Never speak evil of anyone.
- Keep good company or none.
- Live up to your engagements.
- Never play games of chance.
- Drink no intoxicating drinks.
- Good character is above everything else.
- Keep your own secrets if you have any.
- Never borrow if you can possibly help it.
- Do not marry until you are able to support a wife.
- When you speak to a person, look into his eyes.
- Save when you are young to spend when you are old.
- Never run into debt unless you see a way out.
- Good company and good conversation are the sinews of virtue.
- Your character cannot be essentially injured except by your own acts.
- If anybody speaks evil of you, let your life be so that no one believes him.
- When you retire at night, think over what you have done during the day.
- If your hands cannot be employed usefully, attend to the culture of your mind.

Food for thought? It would be wise to read and reflect on these principles once in a while.

– Beecher Hunter