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Quotes by Franklin, Benjamin

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Benjamin Franklin (January 17, 1706 – April 17, 1790) was one of the most prominent of Founders and early political figures and statesmen of the United States. Considered the earliest of the Founders, Franklin was noted for his curiosity, ingenuity and diversity of interests. His wit and wisdom is proverbial to this day. More than anyone he shaped the American Revolution despite never holding national elective office. As a leader of the Enlightenment he had the attention of scientists and intellectuals all across Europe. As agent in London before the Revolution, and Minister to France during, he more than anyone defined the new nation in the minds of Europe. His success in securing French military and financial aid was decisive for American victory over Britain. He invented the lightning rod; he invented the notion of colonial unity; he invented the idea of America; historians hail him as the "First American". The city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania will mark Franklin's 300th Birthday in January 2006, with a wide array of exhibitions, and events citing Franklin's extraordinary accomplishments throughout his illustrious career.

The proof of gold is fire...

- Franklin, Benjamin

Wise men don't need advice. Fools won't take it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

They that will not be counseled, cannot be helped. If you do not hear reason she will rap you on the knuckles.

- Franklin, Benjamin

To bear other people's afflictions, everyone has courage and enough to spare.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Many foxes grow gray but few grow good.

- Franklin, Benjamin

At twenty years of age the will reigns; at thirty, the wit; and at forty, the judgment.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you wouldn't live long, live well; for folly and wickedness shorten life.

- Franklin, Benjamin

An old young man, will be a young old man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Rather go to bed with out dinner than to rise in debt.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools, that don't have brains enough to be honest.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Who had deceived thee so often as thyself?

- Franklin, Benjamin

It is much easier to suppress a first desire than to satisfy those that follow.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you desire many things, many things will seem few.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Diligence is the mother of good luck.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The discontented man finds no easy chair.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Let thy discontents be thy secrets.

- Franklin, Benjamin

All human situations have their inconveniences. We feel those of the present but neither see nor feel those of the future; and hence we often make troublesome changes without amendment, and frequently for the worse.

- Franklin, Benjamin

What has become clear to you since we last met?

- Franklin, Benjamin

God heals and the doctor takes the fee.

- Franklin, Benjamin

No nation was ever ruined by trade.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I have met the enemy, and it is the eyes of other people.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Promises may fit the friends, but non-performance will turn them into enemies.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Energy and persistence alter all things.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Nothing preaches better than the act.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Well done, is better than well said.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Beware of little expenses. A small leak will sink a great ship.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Experience keeps a school, yet fools will learn in no other.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The eye of the master will do more work than both his hands.

- Franklin, Benjamin

It is the eye of other people that ruin us. If I were blind I would want, neither fine clothes, fine houses or fine furniture.

- Franklin, Benjamin

In the affairs of this world, men are saved not by faith, but by the want of it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The way to see by Faith is to shut the Eye of Reason.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There have been as great souls unknown to fame as any of the most famous.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that raises a large family does, indeed, while he lives to observe them, stand a broader mark for sorrow; but then he stands a broader mark for pleasure too.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors. This is robbery. The second by commerce, which is generally cheating. The third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Eat to please thyself, but dress to please others.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

- Franklin, Benjamin

One should eat to live, not live to eat.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Most fools think they are only ignorant.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The world is full of fools and faint hearts; and yet everyone has courage enough to bear the misfortunes, and wisdom enough to manage the affairs of his neighbor.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Spinoza Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that waits upon fortune, is never sure of a dinner.

- Franklin, Benjamin

To be thrown upon one's own resources, is to be cast into the very lap of fortune; for our faculties then undergo a development and display an energy of which they were previously unsusceptible.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There are three faithful friends, an old wife, an old dog, and ready money.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Friends and neighbors, the taxes are indeed very heavy, and if those laid on by the government were the only ones we had to pay, we might more easily discharge them; but we have many others, and much more grievous to some of us. We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride, and four times as much by our

folly; and from these taxes the commissioners cannot ease or deliver us by allowing abatement.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Genius without education is like silver in the mine.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Hide not your talents. They for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I think that a young state, like a young virgin, should modestly stay at home, and wait the application of suitors for an alliance with her; and not run about offering her amity to all the world; and hazarding their refusal. Our virgin is a jolly one; and tho at present not very rich, will in time be a great fortune, and where she has a favorable predisposition, it seems to me well worth cultivating.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Clearly spoken, Mr. Fogg; you explain English by Greek.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Ambition has its disappointments to sour us, but never the good fortune to satisfy us. Its appetite grows keener by indulgence and all we can gratify it with at present serves but the more to inflame its insatiable desires.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We are more thoroughly an enlightened people, with respect to our political interests, than perhaps any other under heaven. Every man among us reads, and is so easy in his circumstances as to have leisure for conversations of improvement and for acquiring information.

- Franklin, Benjamin

In general, mankind, since the improvement of cookery, eats twice as much as nature requires.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion.

- Franklin, Benjamin

When befriended, remember it; when you befriend, forget it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Most people return small favors, acknowledge medium ones and repay greater ones -- with ingratitude.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There never was a truly great man that was not at the same time truly virtuous.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Each year one vicious habit discarded, in time might make the worst of us good.

- Franklin, Benjamin

It is easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Your net worth to the world is usually determined by what remains after your bad habits are subtracted from your good ones.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There are two ways of being happy: We must either diminish our wants or augment our means -- either may do -- the result is the same and it is for each man to decide for himself and to do that which happens to be easier.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Happiness consists more in small conveniences of pleasures that occur every day, than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom to a man in the course of his life.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Take time for all things; great haste makes great waste.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Nothing is more fatal to health than an over care of it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

To lengthen thy Life, lessen thy meals.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Honesty is the best policy.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that lives upon hope will die fasting.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Clean your finger before you point at my spots.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Trouble springs from idleness, and grievous toil from needless ease.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry, all things easy. He that rises late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night, while laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A learned blockhead is a greater blockhead than an ignorant one.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He was so learned that he could name a horse in nine languages; so ignorant that he bought a cow to ride on.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The sleeping fox catches no poultry.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I am lord of myself, accountable to none.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Write your injuries in dust, your benefits in marble.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Don't judge men's wealth or godliness by their Sunday appearance.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that has done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.

- Franklin, Benjamin

God grant that not only the love of liberty but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot anywhere on its surface and say: This is my country!

- Franklin, Benjamin

Proclaim not all thou knowest, all thou knowest, all thou hast, nor all thou cans't.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that hath a trade hath an estate; he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The learned fool writes his nonsense in better language than the unlearned, but it is still nonsense.

- Franklin, Benjamin

She laughs at everything you say. Why? Because she has fine teeth.

- Franklin, Benjamin

God works wonders now and then; Behold a lawyer, an honest man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Laws too gentle, are seldom obeyed; too severe, seldom executed.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A life of leisure and a life of laziness are two things. There will be sleeping enough in the grave.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The things which hurt, instruct.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that won't be counseled can't be helped.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Learn of the skillful; he that teaches himself, has a fool for his master.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Leisure is the time for doing something useful. This leisure the diligent person will obtain the lazy one never.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.

- Franklin, Benjamin

They who give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Where liberty is, there is my country.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Lying rides upon debt's back.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I should have no objection to go over the same life from its beginning to the end: requesting only the advantage authors have, of correcting in a second edition the faults of the first.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late

- Franklin, Benjamin

Were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults in the first.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Whatever is begun in anger, ends in shame.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Those disputing, contradicting, and confuting people are generally unfortunate in their affairs. They get victory, sometimes, but they never get good will, which would be of more use to them.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that blows the coals in quarrels that he has nothing to do with, has no right to complain if the sparks fly in his face.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Savages we call them because their manners differ from ours.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Teach your child to hold his tongue; he'll learn fast enough to speak.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, and half-shut afterwards.

- Franklin, Benjamin

One good husband is worth two good wives, for the scarcer things are, the more they are valued.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Where there is marriage without love, there will be love without marriage.

- Franklin, Benjamin

An undutiful daughter will prove an unmanageable wife.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Creditors have better memories than debtors.

- Franklin, Benjamin

When men and woman die, as poets sung, his heart's the last part moves, her last, the tongue.

- Franklin, Benjamin

When I reflect, as I frequently do, upon the felicity I have enjoyed, I sometimes say to myself, that were the offer made me, I would engage to run again, from beginning to end, the same career of life. All I would ask, should be the privilege of an author, to correct in a second edition, certain errors of the first.

- Franklin, Benjamin

To be humble to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you know how to spend less than you get, you have the philosopher's stone.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Money has never made man happy, nor will it, there is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more of it one has the more one wants.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Necessity never made a good bargain.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Buy what thou hast no need of and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessities.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A little neglect may breed great mischief.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Don't throw stones at your neighbors , if your own windows are glass.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Love thy neighbor -- but don't pull down your hedge.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Plough deep while sluggards sleep.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There are no gains without pains.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Love well, whip well.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that can have patience can have what he will.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There never was a good war or a bad peace.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that would live in peace and at ease must not speak all he knows or all he sees.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Would you persuade, speak of interest, not of reason.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He's the best physician that knows the worthlessness of the most medicines.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There is much difference between imitating a man and counterfeiting him.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I have always thought that one man of tolerable abilities may work great changes, and accomplish great affairs among mankind, if he first forms a good plan, and, cutting off all amusements or other employments that would divert his attention, make the execution of that same plan his sole study and business.

- Franklin, Benjamin

By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Many a man thinks he is buying pleasure, when he is really selling himself to it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The first mistake in public business is going into it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

That which resembles most living one's life over again, seems to be to recall all the circumstances of it; and, to render this remembrance more durable, to record them in writing.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A single man has not nearly the value he would have in a state of union. He is an incomplete animal. He resembles the odd half of a pair of scissors.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you teach a poor young man to shave himself, and keep his razor in order, you may contribute more to the happiness of his life than in giving him a thousand guineas. This sum may be soon spent, the regret only remaining of having foolishly consumed it; but in

the other case, he escapes the frequent vexation of waiting for barbers, and of their sometimes dirty fingers, offensive breaths, and dull razors.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Applause waits on success.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Having been poor is no shame, but being ashamed of it, is.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Work as if you were to live a hundred years. Pray as if you were to die tomorrow.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turned and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse; a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music. This is an advantage itinerant preachers have over those who are stationary, as the latter can not well improve their delivery of a sermon by so many rehearsals.

- Franklin, Benjamin

For the want of a nail, the shoe was lose; for the want of a shoe the horse was lose; and for the want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for the want of care about a horseshoe nail.

- Franklin, Benjamin

One today is worth two tomorrows.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Pride that dines on vanity, sups on contempt.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Idleness and pride tax with a heavier hand than kings and governments.

- Franklin, Benjamin

You may delay, but time will not, and lost time is never found again.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Never leave that till tomorrow which you can do today.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He who waits upon fortune is never sure of dinner.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The best is the cheapest.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Do good to your friends to keep them, to your enemies to win them.

- Franklin, Benjamin

It is foolish to lay out money for the purchase of repentance.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Glass, china, and reputation are easily cracked, and never mended well.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that can take rest is greater than he that can take cities.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If your riches are yours, why don't you take them with to the other world?

- Franklin, Benjamin

He who multiplies riches, multiplies cares.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Who is rich? He that rejoices in his portion.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Some punishment seems preparing for a people who are ungratefully abusing the best constitution and the best King any nation was ever blessed with, intent on nothing but luxury, licentiousness, power, places, pensions, and plunder; while the ministry, divided in their counsels, with little regard for each other, worried by perpetual oppositions, in continual apprehension of changes, intent on securing popularity in case they should lose favor, have for some years past had little time or inclination to attend to our small affairs, whose remoteness makes them appear even smaller.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy. At least you will, by such conduct, stand the best chance for such consequences.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that's secure is not safe.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Furnished as all Europe now is with Academies of Science, with nice instruments and the spirit of experiment, the progress of human knowledge will be rapid and discoveries made of which we have at present no conception. I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon,

since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known a hundred years hence.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Three can keep a secret if two are dead.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He who falls in love with himself will have no rivals.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Observe all men, thyself most.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Write injuries in dust, benefits in marble.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I am about courting a girl I have had but little acquaintance with. How shall I come to a knowledge of her faults, and whether she has the virtues I imagine she has? Answer.

Commend her among her female acquaintances.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Half wits talk much, but say little.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that speaks much, is much mistaken.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He's a fool that makes his doctor his heir.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We are all born ignorant, but one must work hard to remain stupid.

- Franklin, Benjamin

You will find the key to success under the alarm clock.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Would you live with ease, do what you should, and not what you please. Success has ruined many a man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Words may show a man's wit but actions his meaning.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Never confuse motion with action.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Reading makes a full man, meditation a profound man, discourse a clear man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Read much, but not many books.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you would know the value of money try to borrow some.

- Franklin, Benjamin

So much for industry, my friends, and attention to one's own business; but to these we must add frugality if we would make our industry more certainly successful. A man may, if he knows not how to save as he gets, keep his nose all his life to the grindstone, and die not worth a grout at last.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If you can't pay for a thing, don't buy it. If you can't get paid for it, don't sell it. Do this, and you will have calm and drowsy nights, with all of the good business you have now and none of the bad. If you have time, don't wait for time.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Drive your business, let not your business drive you.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Beware the hobby that eats.

- Franklin, Benjamin

In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Certainty? In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes.

- Franklin, Benjamin

When you're finished changing, you're finished.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A cheerful face is nearly as good for an invalid as healthy weather.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We are taxed twice as much by our idleness, three times as much by our pride and four times as much by our foolishness.

- Franklin, Benjamin

There is no kind of dishonesty into which otherwise good people more easily and frequently fall than that of defrauding the government.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A small leak can sink a great ship

- Franklin, Benjamin

Human felicity is produced not as much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen as by little advantages that occur every day.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Since thou are not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be the greatest prodigality.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Do not squander time for that is the stuff life is made of.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He that rises late must trot all day.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Tomorrow every fault is to be amended; but tomorrow never comes.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter, wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others who are within his sphere of action: and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Vice knows that she is ugly, so she puts on her mask.

- Franklin, Benjamin

They that are on their guard and appear ready to receive their adversaries, are in much less danger of being attacked than the supine, secure and negligent.

- Franklin, Benjamin

God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. The more a man has, the more he wants. Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Our necessities never equal our wants.

- Franklin, Benjamin

What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of living might mankind have acquired, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility; what an extension of agriculture even to the tops of our mountains; what rivers rendered navigable, or joined by canals; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices, and improvements might not have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Waste neither time nor money, but make the best use of both. Without industry and frugality, nothing will do, and with them everything.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Industry, perseverance, and frugality make fortune yield.

- Franklin, Benjamin

He does not possess wealth that allows it to possess him.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The way to wealth depends on just two words, industry and frugality.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Wealth is not his that has it, but his that enjoys it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Where sense is wanting, everything is wanting.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The doors of wisdom are never shut.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If a man could have half of his wishes, he would double his troubles.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Industry need not wish.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Never take a wife till thou hast a house (and a fire) to put her in.

- Franklin, Benjamin

It is the working man who is the happy man. It is the idle man who is the miserable man.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The absent are never without fault. Nor the present without excuse.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Admiration is the daughter of ignorance.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Let the child's first lesson be obedience, and the second will be what thou wilt.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Constant complaint is the poorest sort of pay for all the comforts we enjoy.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Singularity in the right hath ruined many; happy those who are convinced of the general opinion.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Who is wise? He that learns from everyone. Who is powerful? He that governs his passions. Who is rich? He who is content. Who is that? Nobody.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Content makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Drive thy business or it will drive thee.

- Franklin, Benjamin

While we may not be able to control all that happens to us, we can control what happens inside us.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The great secret of succeeding in conversation is to admire little, to hear much; always to distrust our own reason, and sometimes that of our friends; never to pretend to wit, but to make that of others appear as much as possibly we can; to hearken to what is said and to answer to the purpose.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If we do not hang together, we will all hang separately.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Those that won't be counseled can't be helped.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Remember that credit is money.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If all printers were determined not to print anything till they were sure it would offend nobody, there would be very little printed.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I look upon death to be as necessary to our constitution as sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Many people die at twenty five and aren't buried until they are seventy five.

- Franklin, Benjamin

The small progress we have made after four or five weeks close attendance and continual reasonings with each other is, methinks, a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the human understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of government, and examined the different forms of those republics which, having been formed with seeds of their own dissolution, now no longer exist.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground

without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?

- Franklin, Benjamin

Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such Thing as Wisdom; and no such Thing as publick Liberty, without Freedom of Speech.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We assemble parliaments and councils, to have the benefit of their collected wisdom; but we necessarily have, at the same time, the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices, and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower their wisdom, and dupe its possessors; and if we may judge by the acts, arrets, and edicts, all the world over, for regulating commerce, an assembly of great men is the greatest fool upon earth.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.

- Franklin, Benjamin

God grant, that not only the Love of Liberty, but a thorough Knowledge of the Rights of Man, may pervade all the Nations of the Earth, so that a Philosopher may set his Foot anywhere on its Surface, and say, This is my Country.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Whilst the last members were signing [the Constitution], Doctor Franklin, looking towards the Presidents chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed

to a few members near him, that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art, a rising, from a setting, sun. I have, said he, often and often, in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now at length, I have the happiness to know, that it is a rising, and not a setting sun.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I confess that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise.

- Franklin, Benjamin

In these sentiments, sir, I agree to this Constitution, with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a General Government necessary for us, and there is no form of government, but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered; and believe further, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Has not the famous political Fable of the Snake, with two Heads and one Body, some useful Instruction contained in it? She was going to a Brook to drink, and in her Way was to pass thro a Hedge, a Twig of which opposed her direct Course; one Head chose to go

on the right side of the Twig, the other on the left, so that time was spent in the Contest, and, before the Decision was completed, the poor Snake died with thirst.

- Franklin, Benjamin

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pocket with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a whistle, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure. This however was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing on my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, Dont give too much for the whistle; and I saved my money.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Rich widows are the only secondhand goods that sell at first-class prices.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Well, Doctor, what have we got a Republic or a Monarchy? A Republic, if you can keep it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

We must not in the course of public life expect immediate approbation and immediate grateful acknowledgment of our services. But let us persevere through abuse and even injury. The internal satisfaction of a good conscience is always present, and time will do us justice in the minds of the people, even those at present the most prejudiced against us.

- Franklin, Benjamin

My rule, in which I have always found satisfaction, is, never to turn aside in public affairs through views of private interest; but to go straight forward in doing what appears to me right at the time, leaving the consequences with Providence.

- Franklin, Benjamin

I am about courting a girl I have had but little acquaintance with. How shall I come to a knowledge of her faults, and whether she has the virtues I imagine she has? Answer. Commend her among her female acquaintance.

- Franklin, Benjamin

For want of a Nail the Shoe was lost; for want of a Shoe the Horse was lost; and for want of a Horse the Rider was lost; being overtaken and slain by the Enemy, all for want of Care about a Horse-shoe Nail.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Who is wise? He that learns from every One. Who is powerful? He that governs his Passions. Who is rich? He that is content. Who is that? Nobody.

- Franklin, Benjamin

A plural Legislature is as necessary to good Government as a single Executive. It is not enough that your Legislature should be numerous; it should also be divided. Numbers alone are not a sufficient Barrier against the Impulses of Passion, the Combinations of Interest, the Intrigues of Faction, the Haste of Folly, or the Spirit of Encroachment. One Division should watch over and controul the other, supply its Wants, correct its Blunders, and cross its Designs, should they be criminal or erroneous. Wisdom is the specific Quality of the Legislature, grows out of the Number of the Body, and is made up of the Portions of Sense and Knowledge which each Member brings to it.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Dr. FRANKLIN mentioned the case of the Prince of Orange [William V], during the late war. An arrangement was made between France and Holland, by which their two fleets were to unite at a certain time and place. The Dutch fleet did not appear. Every body began to wonder at it. At length it was suspected that the stadtholder was at the bottom of the matter. This suspicion prevailed more and more. Yet, as he could not be impeached, and no regular examination took place, he remained in his office; and strengthening his own party, as the party opposed to him became formidable, he gave birth to the most violent animosities and contentions. Had he been impeachable, a regular and peaceful inquiry would have taken place, and he would, if guilty, have been duly punished, if innocent, restored to the confidence of the public.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Dr. Franklin was for retaining the clause [on impeachment], as favorable to the executive.

History furnishes one example only of a first magistrate being formally brought to public justice. Every body cried out against this as unconstitutional. What was the practice before this, in cases where the chief magistrate rendered himself obnoxious? Why, recourse was had to assassination, in which he was not only deprived of his life, but of the opportunity of vindicating his character. It would be the best way, therefore, to provide in the Constitution for the regular punishment of the executive, where his misconduct should deserve it, and for his honorable acquittal, where he should be unjustly accused.

- Franklin, Benjamin

That it is better 100 guilty Persons should escape than that one innocent Person should suffer, is a Maxim that has been long and generally approved.

- Franklin, Benjamin

If a man empties his purse into his head no one can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.

- Franklin, Benjamin

Energy and persistence conquer all things.

- Franklin, Benjamin

They who would trade liberty for security soon have none and deserve neither. (Both Franklin 1775 and Thomas Jefferson said variations of this about the same time of the Founding of the United States)

- Franklin, Benjamin



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