

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
3 5 7

By Ed Halpaus, for the education Committee of the G.L. of MN
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There's one sad truth in life I've found
While journeying east and west -
The only folks we really wound
Are those we love the best.
We flatter those we scarcely know,
We please the fleeting guest,
And deal full many a thoughtless blow
To those who love us best.
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Chaplain's Corner

RELATIONSHIPS

By Alan Greene, Grand Chaplain – Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Minnesota

Our fraternity is one of brotherhood. The definitions state all those engaged in a particular trade or profession or who share a common interest or quality, belong to a brotherhood. It also is defined by the belief that all people should act with warmth and equality toward one another, regardless of differences in race, creed, nationality, etc. Well, these partially define the Masonic Brotherhood, but it is so much more. It is more of a bond between men of good character sharing common moral values and believing that all men are equal. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, represents the foundational teachings of Freemasonry. Further, Masonry teaches that there is one God and men of all religions worship that one God using a variety of different names. Brotherhood is a primary teaching of Masonry -- that each person must be judged as an individual, on his own merits. And rather than associate our word for God with one of the various religions, we choose to adopt a more neutral word -- our word is Master Architect of the Universe, which helps to relate our vision of God to Masonry. Brotherhood is a primary teaching of Masonry.

I want to talk a bit about relationships - especially as it relates to Masonic life. The Masonic relationships are unique in that they relate both to God and to each other (the Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of GOD). Wow, that is huge. Brotherly love is the concept that all of us are brothers to each other under the Fatherhood of God, the Great Architect of the Universe. This phrase is often carved in the stonework of Masonic temples. A glimpse of the Masonic concept of God is provided by examining this phrase. In Freemasonry our Fraternal Order is dedicated to three principle tenets: Love, Relief, and Truth, and the greatest of these is Love.

Let me take a step back and provide a bit of background relating to our Sacred Book of Laws and to Moses, the bringer of the law. He lived in the thirteenth and early part of the twelfth century, B. C. E. He was a Hebrew liberator, leader, prophet, teacher, and historian. Even more interesting, he was known as a prophet in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. And in all three, he was known as the bringer of laws. As described in the Bible, Moses led the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where God gave them the Ten Commandments and other laws contained in the Torah.

These laws, described in our book of sacred laws, were initially intended to establish the moral principles by which the new Israelite nation would govern itself and through which it would manifest God's hope for just and proper relationships among all people. Today, they establish the rules by which all should live their lives.

The 10 Commandments can be thought of as two lists. The first four define our relationship with God,

1. *You shall have no other gods before Me.*
2. *"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them..*
3. *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,*
4. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor any stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

The first four commandments describing our relationship with god can be summarized" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind".

The next six more commandments define our relationship with each other

1. Honor thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee.
2. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
3. You shall not commit adultery.
4. Thou shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.
5. You shall not murder
6. You shall not steal.

. These six laws can be summarized as:

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. In this construct, all men are your neighbors and all your neighbors are your brothers (or sisters).

On these two summery commandments hang all the law and the prophets and the tenets of Masonry. Equally important is the understanding that these Commandments are identical in the Koran, the Bible, and in the Torah. Think about the implications of that little factoid

OK, let's get back to Masonry and especially Brotherhood. As a generalization, all Masons have a belief in a higher power, regardless of the religion followed by a Mason, A Mason believes in a higher Power that reflects love, truth, goodness, charity, and common moral values. Brotherhood is a primary teaching of Masonry-- that each person must be judged as an individual, on his own merits, and that such factors as race, national origin, religious creed, social status, or wealth are incidental to the person's character.

Freemasonry is built upon three basic tenants - Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Brotherly Love is the practice of the Golden Rule. Relief embodies charity for all mankind. Truth is honesty, fair play and adherence to cardinal virtues which are taught during three ceremonies, or "degrees". These moral lessons are taught using the traditional stonemason's tools to reinforce our lessons.

The First Degree uses the gavel and gauge to remind the new member of his dependence on others and subordination to God. In the Second Degree, the square, level and plumb are used to reinforce the central moral lesson of brotherly love and service. And in the Third Degree, the trowel and other tools encourage the candidate to reflect on the end of life and on the value of faithfulness to His promises.

What starts to become apparent is the convergence of our Masonic laws and lessons with that prescribed by the 10 Commandments).

Masons see brotherhood as a form of wisdom, a sort of bond that holds men together - a private friendship that tells us we owe it to each other to be just in our dealings and to refuse to speak evil of each other. Masons believe a man should maintain an attitude of good will, and promote unity and harmony in his relations with one another, his family, and his community. Masons call this way of life believing in the Brotherhood of Man. It really means that every Mason makes it his duty to follow the golden rule.

Words to Live By: “You cannot contribute anything to the ideal condition of mind and heart known as Brotherhood, however much you preach, posture, or agree, unless you live it.” Faith Baldwin

The Education Videos by our education committee can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/glmned>

The latest Masonic Monday Question, and some of the past questions, can be viewed at www.Lodgebuilder.org and at www.mn-masons.org

**Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:
It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!**