

T.F.S.

Three, five, and seven

3 5 7

By Stan Shapiro M.D., Grand Lodge Education Officer G.L. of MN

#195

*” To error is human” Seneca and Cicero*

*“To error is human, to forgive is divine. “ Alexander Pope*

## **When There Is Discontent Among Our Mason Brothers**

As Masons we value brotherly love and the lack of dissention among ourselves. Yet, because we are human, I have noted times when our brothers have withdrawn contact or become angry or retaliated when they thought a brother had done something wrong.

When open discussion does not resolve this issue , we often conclude it is his fault because he does not understand or change his behavior. If we conclude it is because of his personality or there is a clash of personalities, the discontent is not resolved. However, I think there may be a deeper reason for the discontent and about how we might prevent or correct this problem. To do so we need to think about how we may be contributing to the discontent.

Sometimes dissention occurs when we value hard work, excellence, perfection or competition more than practicing the virtue of brotherly love. Brotherly love includes remembering we belong to the same human family, recognizing we are alike in more ways than we are different and learning to appreciate and respect our differences.

When we do not forgive our brother, could it be because we haven't forgiven ourselves for making mistakes or being imperfect? Sometimes we forget the true meaning of brotherly love and how important it is to treat each other as equals and to treat others as we would expect to be treated (the "Golden Rule"). However this rule will not work for those who punish themselves (for example with guilt) when they think they have done something wrong because it follows they will do the same to others. If we expect ourselves to be perfect, we can never be good enough and we may be projecting that impossible belief on our brother we think has done something wrong.

If we look more deeply into ourselves, perhaps this could lead to resolution of the conflict, an increase in brotherly love and recognition that our friendships are more important than who is right.

The next T.F.S. article will be on Forgiveness.

**Words to Live By:** *"Do not be quarrelsome on the way"* Joseph said to his brothers as they are about to journey to bring the family back to Egypt. He is telling them he has forgiven them and not to blame themselves or one another for having sold him into slavery. (Genesis 45:24) I believe this message applies to each of us as we are on our journey in life.

My preferred e-mail address is: [shapiro.stanley@gmail.com](mailto:shapiro.stanley@gmail.com)

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](http://www.Lodgebuilder.org) and at [www.mn-masons.org](http://www.mn-masons.org)