

T.F.S.

Three, five, and seven

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#206

“Blessed is he who has never been tempted; for he knows not the frailty of rectitude.”
Christopher Morley

The following article was written by Donald M. Severson 33 °, who is Past Grand Master Grand lodge of Minnesota and a member of the Grand lodge Education Committee and The Writers Guild. His article is interesting and informative. The description about Temptation, Power, Prestige, and Influence can also be seen in those who have non-political positions of responsibility.

Political Power and Responsibility

Temptation

President and Brother Harry Truman, Grand Master of Masons in Missouri (1940), is credited with the origin of the phrase “Potomac Fever”. By this phrase he eluded to the pitfalls the new, freshmen members of congress with the highest ideals and the most honest intentions to fall victim to. When all of their resolutions and best intentions have gone astray they have fallen prey to the insidious disease, “Potomac fever”. The power, prestige and influence newly acquired by them become so alluring that they are captivated and entranced by it. Their primary concern by the end of their first two year term is then focused on re-election, their ideals and honest intentions abandoned. Once contaminated with this malady, it is virtually incurable and almost always continues on during the entire political career of those who are beset with this often contagious disease, term limits being the only possible cure.

Political Power

The siren call of political power has been in our midst since the beginning of time. It is one of the prices that society pays for a free and open political system, and will be an intrinsic part of our system as long as we are willing to accept the down side along with the up side of a Democratic Republic. It reflects the nature of man implanted in him by God, good and evil. The lust for power and the misuse of it, in

my mind constitutes what in some religions is referred to as original sin.

Prestige

At times, mans ego gets in the way of his better judgment. All men are susceptible to this failing to one degree or another. We all enjoy the accolades and recognition that we may feel is our due. If these honors are justly and honestly earned, then they should be properly rendered, and accepted with grace and dignity. However, to accept the fawning and obsequiousness of those whose sole purpose is to curry favor, simply because public office is held, is not appropriate and does not bode well for the giver or the recipient of that corrupt influence.

Influence

Influence is the handmaiden of power. Influence, based on an elected office, is misused in various areas. This misuse of power and influence at time manifests itself in immoral activities. At other times, it involves financial compensation for influence that benefits the donor of that financial assistance. It is also used when expedient, to gain greater power and influence in the halls of congress such as choice committee assignments and chairmanships.

Our elected officials have a solemn duty to those who have placed their trust in them by sending them to represent us. To carry out the will of that electorate without the expectation of personal gain is the true path of honor, and will be rewarded when the time comes to account for our life here on earth, as must all men regardless of station or office, and where power, prestige and influence will not add one penny weight to the scale of absolute truth.

Words to Live By:

“An honest man can feel no pleasure in the exercise of power over his fellow man.”

Thomas Jefferson

“The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse.” Edmund Burke

If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions, please send them to: 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 and at www.mn-masons.org.