

MASONRY'S PLAN

This STB is the report given by G.M. James Callahan, (PGM, Colorado) at the Grand Lodge of Colorado Session in Jan. 1998. The comments and recommendations are important to all Freemasons! --Editor

It is such a pleasure to be with you today and to know that you have shared your time with me.

All of you know that my Grandfather was a minister and my father wanted me to become a minister and that my father would tell me stories about my Grandfather. Today I want to share one of those stories with you.

Years ago my Grandfather was ministering in one of the mountain towns of Colorado and as many of you know Granddad also raised dogs. The dog he had at that time was named Frances. One evening Granddad was out walking Frances, and when they reached the turn around point, Granddad turned and started back home but, Frances didn't follow. She stood looking off in the direction they had been going. Granddad called her several times but Frances wouldn't come, she maintained her attention on that distant spot. Granddad walked back to the dog, stopped, looked and listened. Nothing. But, then he thought he heard something off in the tall grass and weeds. Stepping to the area and pulling back the weeds he found a small black and white kitten, dirty, hungry and scared. Granddad picked the kitten up took it back to the roadway and when he put the cat down Frances and the kitten accepted each other right then and there. Then Granddad picked up the cat and all three went home. The cat stayed with the family and was named Bob. Granddad said that Bob came into his life as a part of Gods plan for the cat and for Granddad. I hope that by now you have stopped to realize that you and I are here today because of some great plan and only God in his time will allow us to really understand the why.

Now let me ask you this, "What is your plan for Masonry and yourself?". Today I'm not going to tell you what your plan should or should not be, but I must share with you, a part of my plan, so sit back, relax, and please listen.

The First part of my plan, in my vision of Freemasonry, are the words inscribed on my pin "Live Ye Life". I believe that's just what masonry tells us to do with our lives. The second part of my plan are the words of George Washington, when he wrote, "so far as I am concerned the grand purpose of Freemasonry is to promote the happiness of the human race." It seems to me if we can do those two things, then we can with ease and confidence guarantee the continued progress and growth of our fraternity.

At the beginning of this year I asked the brethren of this jurisdiction, (Colorado), to live masonry by example and deed. In other words to do outside the Lodge that which we are taught within. I believe that Freemasonry lived only in our lodge rooms is to miss the Great idea and practice of this craft.

The kind of Freemasonry I like to think about is a living, growing, active Freemasonry where masons know their duty to God, to Country, to Family and to Self and live that kind of life every day. You see as masons that's just how we're supposed to live, because as masons we are expected to act just a little bit better than the rest. And this is our reputation even among non-masons.

King Solomon had a plan to build a magnificent temple dedicated to God and now only remnants are left to tell us of that structure's beauty. Today you can't do anything about that temple. But there is a temple you can do something about, your own inner temple, and it doesn't take three Grand Masters or 153,300 other workmen to build. It just takes you!

The temple I'm talking about is to be constructed in your heart, soul and spirit and its size will be just what you want to make it. The tools required to build the temple I'm talking about are not the ax, hammer or any tool used by the operative workman, you see it only takes a true heart and loving soul.

If in your temple you store up selfishness, greed, jealousy, intolerance or any of those other piety minded attitudes, then your temple will indeed be very small. However, if you as a Freemason hold fast to Love of God and Country, practice Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love, then your temple will hold all of life and love and will never tumble but will forever resist decay.

Brethren, we must plan to build, by using our trestleboard of life--the Volume of Sacred Law--then following its blueprint and plan, construct our temple.

Plan to make Choices:

For this is the ability to choose and the choice you make determines how you finish the race of life.

·Plan to be Magnanimous:

For this is the ability to look past those things that could sting your spirit, for you must learn to forgive and forget.

Plan to be happy:

Each of us must realize that True Happiness is not something you find, but something you must give before it can be received.

Plan to have enthusiasm:

Enthusiasm is nothing more than that small spark that each of us can turn into a beautiful flame.

Plan to have a dream:

Each of us must have a dream of something greater than ourselves, something that will take us from where we are to where we want to be.

Plan to live:

Helen Keller said "To live each day, you must see every sunset and sunrise, listen to the sound of birds and the voice of babies, smell every flower, taste each morsel and touch every object as if tomorrow you would never See, Hear, Smell, Taste or Touch again, for this is the blueprint of life".

Plan to experience joy:

Experience joy everyday in your life, by touching the hem of something far greater than your self and realize that this world is gentler, and more loving then you have ever known.

Plan to love:

Listen to this, you must tell those persons that are important in your life, everyday, how much you love them. You must remind yourself continually of the love that you can give, or your life shall become empty and very lonely.

There is no substitute for following the plan and living day to day the tenets of masonry. For that living will build a temple of eternal beauty that will withstand the trial and test of time.

This year will be remembered for the dedication and effort that each of you have put forth, and the brotherly love and concern you have shown toward each other. I must also say "Thank you" with all my heart, as each of you have, this year, given every kindness and courtesy to the office of the Grand Master and its temporary occupant. That debt can never be repaid with corn, wine, oil or gold but only with gratitude and love.

IN CLOSING I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT EACH OF YOU WILL ALWAYS

Have Health enough to make work a pleasure;

Have Wealth enough to support your needs;

Have Strength enough to battle difficulties and to overcome them;

Have Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them;

Have Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished;

Have Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor;

Have Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others;

Have Faith enough to make real the things of God;

Have Hope enough to remove all fears of the future.

And now may God bless you and Bless you kindly, God speed and good Day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Grand Lodge continue to explore new ways and means to promote masonry within our communities and neighborhoods. We must reach outside our lodge halls and into the world doing those things that can ultimately show the world that Masons are not just good men but great men. You are limited only by your imagination and desire to serve.
2. Our lodges continue to utilize the Award of Excellence Program as a part of the renewal system for membership and as a tool to encourage non-masons to ask about and form a favorable opinion about our craft. Remember if you want someone to take a liking to you, you must first show that you like them.
3. The masons of Colorado must continually strive to find new and innovative ways to promote membership. Membership acquisition cannot be limited to the "Friend to Friend" program or any other single approach. We must use any creative means to encourage growth and revitalization of our lodges. We can use ads in local papers or special lodge activities that create friendships first and masons second.

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