

# **MOTIVATING MASONS**

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Personal needs of early man motivated him to action. They compelled him to plan and achieve a goal – self preservation. Self preservation of himself and of his family demanded that he hunt for food to satisfy his hunger, and that he find a cave or erect a shelter for protection from the elements of weather, from wild beasts of the field, and even from birds of prey. These needs, these goals, motivated ancient man to fashion and become skillful in the use of his club, efficient with his bow and arrow, or adept with his hands to manipulate crude tools. But before he did all these things, he used his mental resources, his brain, his God-given power to reason.

Ages have passed since the early day of that ancient man. We are living in a society benefiting from the advances of science, technology, technocracy, automation, skills, and know-how, which have reduced the drudgery of manual labor and even mental labor – yet raised the standard of living in the greater part of the world. But the shorter work week, with more leisure time, presents even a greater challenge – motivating people to make the best use of their time and talent. The fundamentals of motivating people are still the same as they have been over ages past.

Today in our economic, our social, our religious, our fraternal walks of life we motivate people – how? By giving them a goal. People are motivated by goals and responsibilities.

Every Brother Mason who has become one of our Fraternity has subscribed to the Masonic principles of character building, with the objective of living a life founded upon those principles. Temperance, fortitude, prudence, justice, faith, hope, charity, relief, truth, and brotherly love are only a few to be mentioned. They all combine to form on our individual trestleboards, guidelines and patterns for achieving a goal – the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

The Brotherhood of Man. Let's talk about it a little while this morning.

Brotherhood is the greatest motivating principle in the world. Whether you are working with Masons, men of other fraternal groups, churches, business, social life, administration, public life, brotherhood in the

greatest motivating principle in the world. It is the basic principle of all the great religions of the world, and has been over the ages past. It is the principle that Jesus used for all his preaching on "love thy fellowman," "love thy neighbor" – not just the neighbor next door, but every man on the earth.

I direct your attention to the story of the Good Samaritan; not to the man who had been beaten and lay by the side of the road wounded and bleeding, not to the Samaritan who came by and befriended him, not to the innkeeper; but to the other two characters in the story – the priest and the Levite. What did they do? They walked by on the other side. My brother Master Mason, have you ever walked by on the other side? Or are you motivated by the spirit of compassion to help one who is in need of a little of the milk of human kindness?

The Carpenter of Nazareth 2,000 years ago learned the skills of working with tools, learned them in an operative trade serving as apprentice, I suppose, to his father. He learned the proper use of the working tools, the square, the level, and the plumb. Then after about 30 years, motivated by a higher power, he left the carpenter shop to put the symbolic working tools to use in an even more practical way over the short span of the next three years. He used these tools to teach and to inspire men to build their temples not made with hands, to build lives of usefulness to fellowmen; and the world has never been the same since.

In the ancient days the Samaritans were considered, if I may use the crude word, lice. The city of Nablus, in old Samaria, even in the Biblical days was considered to be a hot bed of what you might call unregenerated thinking. A Brother with whom I talked about ten days ago, told me that he visited Nablus in 1927 with a group of students from Harvard. Their group was there to study educational programs in that part of the world, in the Holy Land. He said to me that "We passed through Nablus like 'greased lightning' because we didn't dare stay there lest we get shot at." Here was a group of 30 Harvard students and professors in the year 1927, not B.C. but A.D., who didn't dare stay in Nablus over night lest they be shot at. The other day, less than two weeks ago, in September 1967, it was in the town of Nablus, now in Jordan, that a train was blown up; many of you read about it in the newspapers. What did the army of Israel do? They took everybody out, put them on a hill, and blew up the town. This was only two or three weeks ago. Brethren, the old hatred toward the Samaritans still exists, and the hatred of the Samaritans toward the rest of the world still exists 2,000 years after Christ.

Somehow something has to be done by thinking people who will do all in their power to promote goodwill among nations of the earth. Is this a challenge to Brothers of the Masonic fraternity? But if we are going to put to work this spirit of brotherhood which is a Masonic principle, how do we do it? How do we do it **now**? Can you think of anything that should motivate you more, my Brother, if you believe in it?

Why do some people do selfish things? Why do many people do unselfish things? People do unselfish things for personal satisfaction perhaps. Yes, in some cases a man will give \$1,000 to your Masonic Home to get his name on a brass plate on the door; or he may give \$2,000 to your Lodge for some purpose and await reading his name in the local paper. Or if he is of that economic position he may give a million dollars to endow a college and be pleased to see his name on the cornerstone or over a doorway. But I am sure that these are the on-half of one-tenth of 1% of men and Brothers who do and give unselfishly.

But when you do something for someone else you create a response, a challenge and a response. It was Toynbee's phrase for the whole basis of developing civilization that went something like this, as I remember it: "Here is a challenge, for example. You use it to meet the challenge of the day, and when you do, you grow. Then there immediately arises a still greater challenge and you rise to meet that. Without this challenge and response civilizations die."

What were the challenges to Master Masons in this land 200 years ago when the Brothers whose pictures we viewed on the screen last night – George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and others of that day – served their country by fighting and working for freedom and the rights of the individual? What were the challenges 140 years ago when a Brother named Simon Bolivar freed those South American countries which today are Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Bolivia from the dictates of the Spanish monarchs? My Brothers, what do you believe to be the challenges to Master Masons today?

Someone has said that the achievements of our predecessors are sometimes overshadowed by our leaders of today only because the stairs are there making possible the attainment of greater heights. My Brothers, the stairs are there for you and me to tread upon, not because we built them, but because someone who preceded us planned, worked, fought to build them for us. The patriot of this

nation 200 years ago, the patriot in the South American countries, men who helped to build these great nations, founded and made a heritage for us. The steps and stairs are there.

What is our challenge today? What is our Masonic responsibility? Defined in simple terms, it is to protect the oppressed, right the wrong, raise the fallen, relieve the distressed, enlighten people, serve well the common weal, and be fruitful of good works. What have you done, my Brother? What have we done recently that would warrant us being disciples of the principle of the brotherhood of man?

First and basic, we have to be inculcated with the principle before we can put it to work, or else it dies. If you have a muscle in your arm and you tie it in a sling, it atrophies. If you held your arm in a sling for ten days you would find that you would have trouble moving your arm in a sling for ten days you would find that you would have trouble moving it when you removed the sling. My Brothers, if you work in terms of, think in terms of, principles of good works, but you don't put them into action they atrophy, you atrophy, and your principles and ideals die.

It was Alfred North Whitehead, the mathematician and philosopher, who said, "When your ideals become practice you stagnate." When I first heard this I questioned, how can this be? "When your ideals become practice you stagnate." We talk in terms of putting ideals into practice: but here is what he meant. If you only put your ideals into full practice and by rote keep practicing that ideal, you don't keep hold of that elusive ideal of stretching forth even further, and unless you do, you stop. Is this a Masonic principle of motivating people, motivating Masons? It was Browning, I believe, who wrote, "Ah, but a man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what is heaven for?"

You have all read letters from children to God. One little boy wrote a letter to God thanking him for being such a fine pitcher." The boy gave the letter to his teacher in school. She was intrigued and asked the little boy to explain. "Just what do you mean by this letter to God complimenting him for being such a fine baseball player?" "Well, it's very simple", said he, "Every afternoon after school I go home, I get my baseball and my mitt and go out in my back yard and I throw my ball up in the air as far as I can. God holds it for a little while, and then he throws it back to me." Is this a Masonic principle motivating Masons? My Brothers, are you and I motivated by Him who holds the ball for a little while and then throws it right back to the little boy?

The railroads have a slogan, "Keep your hand on the throttle and your eye upon the rail," but of course it means eternally keeping your eye further forward, further ahead, never stopping.

Brothers, were it not that you and I were challenged to live up to the ideals of Masonry, to put them into practice, and to see to it that we don't stagnate and stop with that specific practice, but edge forward and press on, each of us might well have still remained in the rubbish of the temple in the southeast corner.

How do we put these ideals to work into the most practical expression? Each of you can reminisce on what has been done by you and your Brethren in your respective Grand Jurisdictions by way of putting Masonic principles into practice. We have just heard what Indiana has been doing, for themselves, in their fine Masonic Home and Hospital, and now they are going to do something for others.

How do we put these ideals to work into the most practical expression? If you, my Brothers, close the door of the Lodge and leave there having learned only the fundamental teachings and don't do something about them, high as the ideals may be, you and the Lodge will die.

All day yesterday every Brother who spoke from this podium referred to something that can be done by Masons for a Lodge or for others. Suggest to you that motivating Masons begins in the Lodge where a man has knelt at the altar and viewed the Holy Scripture and where, my Brethren, you have inspired him, shall we say, to thinking in terms of the lofty ideals of Masonry. But unless our ritual, our ritualistic work, our floor work, our lectures, the demeanor of our officers and all who take part – unless they perform it with the dignity and the decorum that is due, a Brother is not going to be stimulated to make Masonry a vital force in his life.

In this Conference so much has been done during the past 18 years by way of presenting programs for education, challenging Masons to develop thinking minds, as well as understanding hearts.

We heard about scholarship programs today. Some Grand Lodges sponsor them. And Kansas does a remarkable job in helping young people to further their education via scholarships. In Minnesota we are carrying on in a very modest way a program designed to help our juvenile court judges, not as a lodge, not as a Grand Lodge, but as Master Masons who will go to the juvenile court judge and say, "Mr. Judge, Your Honor, how can I help you in the problems of the day?"

Can I take a boy over the weekend who is a problem to you? Can I take a boy or girl into our home? Can I help him or her to get a job?

Our Masonic Memorial Hospital at the University of Minnesota is the gift of Masons of our state to the University. The hospital serves with care and treatment patients who are suffering from cancer. In two statewide campaigns Masons of Minnesota made voluntary gifts to build the hospital in our University Medical Center at Minneapolis. The first campaign in 1955 netted \$1,000,000 to pay in full for a two floor 80 bed hospital. The second campaign in 1963 produced \$1,100,000 to double the size of the hospital. Here is an example of opportunities offered our Brother Masons to "give not until it hurts, but until you feel good." They gave and they feel good, and each giver is proud to have paid for some of the bricks and mortar and steel.

It is sometimes suggested that the Masonic Fraternity needs to hire public relations men to publicize Masonry. Brothers, may I simply say to you that you and I can be the greatest public relations men for Freemasonry when we wear that square and compass which we saw on the screen last night. But first, last, and always, let's remember when we wear it to act like Masons. The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up a blazing torch in the dark streets for men to see by; but the saint is the man who walks through the dark paths of the world, himself a light.

In closing may I quote the lines from Brother Edwin Markham who wrote:

We are blind until we see that in the human plan  
Nothing is worth the making if it does not make the man.  
Why build these cities glorious if man unbuilt goes;  
In vain we build the work unless the builder also grows."

Motivating Masons then is your job; it is my job. Let all of us at this Conference go back to our Lodges in these 12 states – where there are 1,250,000 Master Masons – and let us dedicate ourselves to lives of precept and example. Let us kindle the fires which will spread and challenge Masons to work, strive, and reach for that goal of Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God.

"Three things I know must always be  
To keep a nation strong and free:  
One is a firm and steady hand  
To work and serve and till the land;

One is a hearthstone bright and clear  
    With many happy busy people near;  
One is a worn and beaten way  
    To where the people go to pray.  
So long as these are kept alive  
    Nations and people will survive.  
God keep them always everywhere –  
    Our land, our home, our place of prayer.

“A man’s reach must exceed his grasp, or what is heaven for?” My  
Brethren, how high are your ideals? How high is your grasp?

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