

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH  
650 Fisgard Street, Victoria, B.C.

**ARE WORKING TOOLS IMPORTANT?**

An address to the  
Victoria Lodge of Education and Research  
3.

on the occasion of the fraternal visit of the Research Lodge of Oregon, No. 198  
22nd June, 1974, by the Master of that Lodge  
W. Bro. Carl W. Hopp, Past Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge A.F. and A.M. of  
Oregon  
and first read before that Grand Lodge in June 1973

**ARE WORKING TOOLS IMPORTANT?**

1974 - 2

For forty-seven years, I have been attending Masonic meetings. I have listened to many Masonic papers being presented. I have attended Masonic lectures and participated in Masonic seminars. Each time, there is a sense of feeling within me that I have gained additional knowledge.

Masonry teaches that each of us must interpret its lessons and symbols for himself. One's religion alone is good reason for the various interpretations that our brethren may give to the same subject matter. If you are truly interested in improving and adding to your knowledge of freemasonry, I know of no better way than by reading, by witnessing the various degrees over and over again, and by listening to what others have to say. You may not always agree with them but by paying attention you will frequently be benefited. Remember Voltaire's often-quoted statement: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

How many of you have done as I have, namely retrace the years to the time when you were sitting in the preparation room, waiting for the proper moment to approach the door of the lodge for your first admission? What thoughts were going through your mind? Were you nervous because some friend, thinking he was being funny, had suggested that there might be some horse play or rough stuff? Or, did a real friend put you at ease by telling you of the seriousness and solemnity of the degree? Or, were you at a complete loss, as I was because no one was thoughtful enough to take the time to help you be mentally prepared to receive the greatest benefits from the ritual work?

I am certain that every candidate, if properly prepared mentally, as well as being clothed properly, would learn more and possibly be more interested in continuing his active involvement in his lodge. I heartily recommend that the information on page 22 of the Oregon Mentor Manual be read to him. It is as follows:

"How may I receive the most benefit from the Entered Apprentice Degree? By approaching your first step in Masonry - The Entered Apprentice Degree - with a humble and serene attitude; with mind and heart attuned to those things which elevate man to the position of dignity and responsibility which his Creator intended him to occupy. Before you enter the Lodge room, dismiss from your mind all worldly matters that might detract from the

seriousness and solemnity

of that which you will hear and see. Be keenly alert to all that is said and done, for in this manner

only can you receive and assimilate the time-honored teachings of Freemasonry.

1. The methods used for your instruction will be new to you, for the great lessons of our Craft are taught by allegory and by symbolism. But these methods are as effective as they are ancient, as you will discover if your mind and heart are receptive as the degree progresses. Remember, too, that every man that is now a Mason has had exactly the same teachings.

There is no rough stuff or horse play in any of the Symbolic Degrees. "

With this information I'm sure that our candidates will be more alert and will absorb more of what is presented to them.

4.

It is amazing to me to see how little so many of our Brethren remember of the lessons acknowledge given them in the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason degrees. Recently, I have asked several Brethren if they could name the principal working tools of a Master Mason. The answers were pitiful. Could we make better Masons of our candidates and retain more of them in our ranks if we devoted more time and attention to them in the preparation room?

Are working tools important? If so, how can we use them if we don't remember what they are? If we do know them, do we know how to use them properly?

My working years were devoted to manufacturing and construction. It was well known to all employees that tool rooms, well stocked with varied tools and equipment were available to them. It was also well known that by carefully selecting and developing the skill to use them properly, we could increase our production, accomplish better workmanship and at the same time reduce costs. This would accomplish three things: Enhance the reputation of your company, place it in a more competitive position, and thereby assuring greater employment for the employees.

What would the alternative be? I have seen it and so have you; sloppy work, inefficiency and a more expensive operation. The end result would be loss of business and ultimately, bankruptcy.

In our Masonic Fraternity, we have a similar situation. Many wonderful lessons have been presented to us; also many working tools have been given to us symbolically to use. If these lessons are observed and the working tools applied in the manner in which we are taught to use them, we know that, when we reach the end of life's journey, we will be better and wiser men; that we will have faith in the immortality of the soul; and that we will not be afraid to face our future existence.

Should we neither benefit from these wonderful lessons nor use the symbolic working tools as we are taught, the chances are great that we will not be ready to make that transition peacefully but will be confronted with confused thoughts and fear of the unknown.

There are those Masons who may ask, due to the fact that they paid little attention when they were being initiated and not interested enough to find out later, what are the working tools of a Mason? Some may answer, the twenty-four inch gauge and common gavel, the plumb, square and level and the trowel. Are these all? I should say not. Listen to what Albert Pike has to say on this subject:

"We should not however forget that these are not the only tools and implements used by operative and speculative Masons in the building of their spiritual edifices; all the forces at man's disposal or under man's control, or subject to man's influence, are his working tools."

Another Masonic scholar has this to say:

"I am overwhelmed with the tremendous task of enumerating the working tools which are given to us, and developing their spiritual aspects. We are given a most concentrated capsule overflowing with an abundance of thoughts. Some few can be pointed out with a prayer that these might lead others to seek and find out. "Acres of Diamonds!" which are priceless jewels of thought for contriving a structure which is the immortal part of man".

And speaking of prayer, I cannot help but remind you that prayer is frequently used in our business sessions as well as in the ritual of each degree. We do not hesitate to ask for guidance and help when needed, and so inform the candidate. He is told very clearly what to do and where to go for this help when he has exhausted all of his own resources.

Yes, my Brethren, prayer is one of the most useful tools at our disposal. Almost every P. O. W. in Vietnam upon his return to the United States, stated that his prayers to Almighty God supported him

5. through his terrible ordeal. Lt. James C. Wittaker, in his book entitled "We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing" wherein he told the epic story of the ordeal and rescue of those who were with Eddie Rickenbacker on the plane lost in the Pacific. He stated that after three weeks of intense suffering due to thirst, hunger, very hot weather and being in shark infested waters, they finally resorted to prayer, and their prayers were answered. They were all rescued but one who was unable to survive their grueling experience.

There are many more working tools to which I could refer, such as Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. Much could be said about each of these, but for now I wish to make a few comments only about the Twenty-Four Inch Gauge.

The Twenty-Four Inch Gauge is an instrument used by operative Masons to measure and lay out their work; but ancient, Free and Accepted Masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of dividing their time; it being divided into twenty-four equal parts, is emblematic of the twenty-four hours of the day, which they are taught to divide into three equal parts, whereby are found eight hours for their usual vocations; eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy Brother; and eight hours for refreshment and sleep.

We know what the operative mason did with his gauge. He measured his stone; if the ashlar was too long, he shortened it. If it was too wide, he narrowed it. If it could not be made true and square, it was discarded and he would start again with another rough ashlar.

But how do we as speculative Masons use this gauge? Is it not to measure time and time alone? Should every person measure and distribute his time in the same proportions? To me, the answer is no. All people do not have the same

capabilities, for various reasons. Some people have better health than others, require less sleep, are stronger than others, are more ambitious, and have a greater desire to improve themselves. These reasons could go on and on.

I do believe, however, that each person should use the twenty-four inch gauge as a guide to measure and allocate his time. If eight hours is not required for refreshment and sleep, devote the difference elsewhere. Do not waste time. Time lost can never be regained. It is gone forever.

What is meant by eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy Brother? To me this not only includes prayer, meditation, and helping a distressed Master Mason, but also working with character building organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, YMCA and YWCA, Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, the Aged, the handicapped and the many others of this type that need our help.

The eight hours for your usual vocation is a matter of scheduling, Years ago, twelve hours was a normal work day. Later it was reduced to ten hours. Today it is eight hours. There is now consideration being given to a six-hour day. Some people, because of health or age are not able to work a full day. Their time must be gauged accordingly but not wasted.

We have all heard the person who, when asked to do something for his Masonic Lodge or for his church or for some other worthwhile purpose, gives the answer.... "I'm sorry, I just don't have the time". In most cases, this is not true. Have him read the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, verses one through eight in which it says.... "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven." It concludes by saying: "a time to keep silent and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace." But nowhere does it set forth a time to waste time.

Lincoln, before entering public office, devoted all of his spare time learning political affairs and studying the problems of slavery. Albert Pike became a well educated man and scholar by utilizing all of his spare time in study. Both men knew the meaning of the twenty-four inch gauge.

6.

Many questions can be asked about time. Probably the one that concerns people the most is...how long do we have on earth? The Bible tells us three score and ten years. This undoubtedly is an average but it appears to be the best answer to the question.

Knowing that our days are numbered and our time is limited, does it not behoove us all to take another serious look at our schedule and make sure that we are using the twenty-four inch gauge properly and wisely. I am sure that we will all find ample room for improvement.

In reviewing the working tools of Freemasonry known to me, and after giving them careful study and consideration, I can honestly say - Yes, they are not only important, they are most important if we wish to develop and live the type of life outlined for us in this great philosophical order of Freemasonry to which we belong.