

**Master's Message
Carried Any Donkeys Lately?**

My Brother,

Remember the story of a man, his boy, and the donkey? An old allegory that has been passed down for generations tells about an elderly man who was traveling with a boy and a donkey.

As they walked through a village, the man was leading the donkey and the boy was walking behind. The townspeople said the old man was a fool for not riding, so to please them, he climbed up on the donkey's back.

When they came to the next village, the people said the old man was cruel to let the child walk while he enjoyed the ride. So, to please them, he got off and set the boy on the donkey's back and continued on his way.

In the third village, people accused the child of being lazy for making the old man walk, and the suggestion was made that they both ride. So the man climbed on and they set off again.

In the fourth village, the townspeople were offended at the cruelty to the donkey because he was made to carry two people. The frustrated man was last seen carrying the donkey down the road.

We express amusement, but this tale makes a good point: In this story of a man and his donkey, the man is such a people-pleaser that he quickly alters his behavior to soothe each critic he encounters on the road. This one example of an inappropriate response to criticism, "Please all, and you will please none," and to attempt to do so would be foolish and we end up carrying a heavy load. Well-meaning critics may offer us counsel, and much of it is valuable. But when we try to do everything other believers want us to do, we can easily become frustrated and bewildered.

We must carefully understand our perspective on criticism and welcome it as we would a gift from a friend. The critic's gift is the chance to transform and improve our actions now, rather than later. You must decide how you are going to get your donkey to town and set out on your journey. Stick with your plan as much as possible, but be willing to change what needs to be corrected by doing what we believe God wants us to do.

And so we must bear in mind, My Dear Brother, that the One we must please above all others is our Supreme Grand Master. And we do that by obeying God's Word and by living true to the principal tenets of Freemasonry which are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

Fraternally yours,

Phil Catalio

Worshipful Master