

NV Grand Lodge Short Lecture Series
A MASON'S DUTY & HAPPINESS

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The subject of this educational lecture is the relation of a Mason's Duty and his Happiness. This topic was addressed by Bro. C.D. Holmes of *Lochearn Lodge, Alberta, Canada 54 years ago in February of 1969*. Bro. Holmes wrote that complacency was the greatest problem on the time. It is hard to argue that the same does not hold true today. In 1969, Brother Holmes stated *"The greatest reason for so much distress and sorrow, is surely because mankind has become too self-satisfied with the ways things are. In our affluent society we have become satisfied with our thought, -- we have become satisfied with our deeds -- we have become satisfied with our way of living. We have, in the world today, tremendous servants of leisure that our forefathers would never have dreamed possible. It is possible to travel to any place on this globe in just a few short hours. We can watch events happen half a world away, by the aid of television."*

Yes brethren, we have it a good deal better now than at any time in history, so why should it be that we have more distress, why do we have hatred and suspicion at every hand, why do we have more sorrow, grief and problems of every kind surrounding us as never before. With all our luxury, you would think that happiness would be everywhere.

Bro Holmes believes, as Masons we have the duty and it is within our power, to change the course of greed, hatred and selfishness which surrounds each of us and engulfs our communities, country, and world. If all Masons throughout the world would practice outside of the lodge, that which we are taught in it, if we were to spread the philosophies and teachings of our craft, we could influence, a person, a community, and a country, or even the world.

It has been said that "when the world is at its worst, then Masonry should be at its best." Mediocrity in Masonry will never do anything to make the world a better place, that if each and every one of us stood up to be counted, if we would turn our backs on that which is fraudulent, that which is cheap, yes that which goes beyond the circumference of the circle in any part of our lives, and said: "There is a right way and a wrong way, and believe in doing what is right", and stick with our beliefs despite the oppositions of this material world, we would then be well on our way to raising our Masonic organizations to the meaningful noble edifices that speculative freemasonry evolved from.

When we receive our Master Mason's aprons, was it just a pass to go on and upward in learning and acting or was it more. For instance, let us ponder the Worshipful Master's query of the Senior Warden – "What induced you to become a Master Mason?" – And what is his answer? – "The desire to obtain the secrets of a master Mason, that I might travel in foreign countries...receive a master's wage to support myself and my family". Now by being better able to support ourselves, could we not mean – the building of a better moral base from which to branch out and be accountable for, make it wider than our own families, extend it to our neighbors and communities. No man is an island unto himself – we are all interdependent, and so, each person we meet or engage with become dependent upon us and we on them. How we discharge our responsibility to this dependency is, of course, up to each one of us individually, and if we take our responsibilities as a master Mason seriously, we will learn to support those dependent upon us and "contribute more liberally to the relief of distressed brother master mason's or their widows and orphans." As such we are inclined to think of this in a temporal sense, and, of course, I believe that we should give monetary help to these unfortunates, but should we not think more of our moral support through visitation, support, and relief? Sometimes the widows and orphans are much better off moneywise by being such, better a greater need for support, kindness, mentorship, and other things is more important. Often it is just a kindly word, an attentive ear, and a faithful breast is most likely the most important step in the support of a distressed Master Mason. Here is where the outstretched hand of a brother can pick us up and help us to get back on track. Just take a few minutes a day and look across our brotherhood, do we see someone in distress—could it be that lack of concern on our part, could it be something that we said, or more importantly something we did or did not do that caused this brother to falter and to feel that our Craft is just an empty thing after all? Our duties are to see that we do not let down and cause our brothers or any person at all to go astray because of us.

Additionally, and of critical importance, we miss a very great opportunity; and are derelict in our duties if we

do not take newly raised Masons to nurture and to care for them early in their Masonic life and get them desirous of seeking more light in masonry participating in our efforts of charity and enjoying the fellowship of the brethren. This early time in the life of any Mason is the most critical, and many leaders of our bodies have routinely emphasized a very great percentage of the people that we lose, or find to be just lukewarm, are that way because we did not exercise our responsibilities to our newly raised brother and bring him on to be active in the Craft. It is so very easy to stop after taking the third degree and sit idly watching what is going on around, and yes as we know, there are mighty few who will step up and say to the Master. the lectures or partake in degree work. If for no other reason than a lack of confidence. However, with a little encouragement, help, and praise for efforts expended, more of our brethren can build his temple.

Now for a short discourse on happiness. You will remember that during the Middle Chamber Lecture you are led up the winding stairs. When it is explained to you the difference between Operative and Speculative Masonry, that "by speculative Masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy and practice charity." "It is so far interwoven with religion (and this is what is so important) as to lay us under obligation to render that rational homage to God, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness." Duty and happiness go hand in hand—my brethren, we must inculcate within ourselves that real happiness comes only from the proper discharge of our duties and obligations to God, our neighbors and ourselves. And so, while there are great and weighty obligations and responsibilities in being true Master Masons, our active discharge of these duties is a key to our true happiness.

"Let us be happy ourselves and endeavor to promote the happiness of others". This we can do by being true to our teachings and philosophies – not just because lodge is a nice place to come each month, but because we wish to build ourselves up morally and spiritually and help our brethren to do the same, and by so doing discharge our obligations to each other as Master Masons.

I am convinced, that if we each make up our minds to be careful to see that our temples contain no cracks of cheating and wrong-doing and with the help of the G.A.O.T.U., our efforts will not be in vain, and we strive to be diligent in the duties of our respective callings, if we are active in our benevolence to all mankind, if we are willing to spend ourselves in doing something beyond ourselves, that which we know is right, then we as Masons will indeed help to usher in a great new day of love, forbearance and peace, and thus find that happiness which we all look for.

As Albert Pike said: "*What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.*"

Reference

Holmes, C.D. (1969, February). *A Mason's Duty and Happiness*. Retrieved from <http://www.nilevalleytoday.com/Shared%20Documents/125.%20Mason%27sduty%20and%20happiness%20by%20C%20D%20Holmes.pdf>