

# *What is Freemasonry?*

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STUDY OUTLINE No. 9

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NOTE—Let us not attempt to define Freemasonry definitely or completely, because Freemasonry comprehends such a vast field of speculation that the best any of us can hope is a continually improving conception of Masonry. The object of this outline is to develop thought and discussion, and it is the desire of the committee to have suggestions or criticisms brought to their attention.

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### **Tenets.**

We applied for the degrees in Freemasonry because we had a desire for knowledge of how to build a temple of character, and with a sincere wish of being serviceable to our fellow creatures. At least we professed such motives. We have found all the forms and ceremonies have the basic motive of teaching central truths of morality.

The tenets of our profession are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Perhaps one of the most pertinent reasons why we do not progress more rapidly in our endeavors to break off the rough and superfluous parts of our nature, is because we are not always honest with ourselves. Do we fully and unreservedly subscribe to the tenet of Brotherly Love as defined in our Masonic ritual?

The whole system of morality we call Freemasonry is based on the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man and the Immortality of the Soul. Before we can consistently call God our Father we must admit that all his children are our brothers. True, they may be remiss and even vicious, yet they are our brothers and we owe them every effort to lift them to higher levels. Relief will be rarely necessary when mankind practices Brotherly Love, and the Divine attribute Truth will shine with clearer splendor when we have dissipated the fog of prejudice, hatred, envy, and the many passions which enslave us.

If we are to reach the maximum attainment in Freemasonry we must begin by the practice of the first tenet. The cardinal virtues will help us in every way.



What makes you a Freemason? Does membership in a Lodge? Does profession of certain altruistic theories? It is the opinion of many distinguished Masonic scholars that the only thing that makes a man a real Freemason is the practice of this Royal Art.

It is necessary for us to go through forms and ceremonies, take obligations, learn verbal lessons, and attend meetings. These, however, are but means to an end. It is essential that every officer be proficient in the ritual. The ritual is the key to the whole system. It is, however, only a key. The real and vital secrets are safely guarded. They are unintelligible to the unworthy. To those who aspire to the work of building character there is work that is richly rewarded. The Entered Apprentice who serves faithfully will be promoted to more skillful work. In time he may become proficient enough to be a Master Mason. In our Lodges we advance the candidates with a mere formal examination, which really amounts to nothing more than memorization. In reality we are all but Entered Apprentices. Until we have become proficient in the basic moral lessons of this degree we are not qualified to be advanced. The real Master Mason is one who has become master of all his passions.

#### References:

Symbolism of the Three Degrees (Street):

Page 68—Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Page 86—Cardinal Virtues.

The Lodge and the Craft (Blackmer):

Pages 83 to 103 inclusive.

Symbolical Masonry (Haywood):

Page 255—Brotherly Love.

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Mackey):

#### Articles:

Brotherly Love	Points of Fellowship, Five
Relief	Chromatic Calendar, The Five Points
Temperance	Royal Art
Fortitude	Secrecy and Silence
Truth	Secret Doctrine
Prudence	Morality of Freemasonry
Justice	Moral Law
	Progressive Masonry