

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Edwin Graves Taylor**  
Years in Masonry: **3**  
Lodge Name and Number: **St. Andrews Lodge No. 18  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Some men to whom I looked up were Masons, and I wanted to join a group about which they were passionate and that seemed to benefit them.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Somewhere between poor and mediocre.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**The application of the working tools and the lessons in my life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Having Brothers that genuinely care about me and hold me accountable.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not. The lessons in the Degrees are far more detailed than you can fully understand and comprehend in one month.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**110%, yes! I talk with Brothers that have been in the Fraternity far longer than I, and are more proficient in Freemasonry, and they still do not understand/comprehend all that is contained within the Degrees. We can have a conversation, and both come out more knowledgeable than before. You can never stop learning.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No, these are not beneficial. I believe that studies have shown that one-day Masons have roughly the same retention rate as “conventional” Masons. And, we still have a problem keeping “conventional” Masons. So I do not see any benefits to have one-day, or fast tracked, Degrees.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**If you do not benefit from being involved in something, you shy away from that group. I believe that all humans have a desire to learn. If Lodges do not offer this, then what else is keeping men engaged?**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**NO!!!! Being charitable is not our purpose. The intent of Freemasonry is defined in the Entered Apprentice Degree. It is to make men wiser, better and consequently happier. That is the purpose of Freemasonry.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Freemasonry is not for everyone. This is not a group that will benefit you by just being a member. You have to want to be a Freemason, and you have to work hard at it. If you do not have a desire and drive to improve yourself, then you are not going to get anything out of it. Freemasonry does not automatically entitle you to the benefits. It provides the tools for you to build a better life for yourself. If you're not willing to use those tools, and put in the work, then this is not for you.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Mike Bryant**  
Years in Masonry: **14**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Breathitt Lodge No. 649  
(KY);  
Booneville Lodge No. 939  
(KY);  
Henry Bannister Grand  
Lodge of Research (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I was intrigued by the history and rituals.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I am concerned that Freemasonry is losing membership, but further concerned by some of the proposed solutions and path that many want to take to recruit. I hold to the more traditional view of no active recruitment. Another proposed fix to recruit more members often comes in the form of something like, “do more community activities so people will see us.” This, to me, sets a dangerous precedent since Freemasonry is not about the community as much as the Brotherhood and self-improvement.**

**On a positive note, I see a resurgent interest in the symbols and history of Masonry, and the push for self-improvement. That is very promising.**



3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has really helped me to be much more introspective, and learn to live by what I say. The ashlar is the symbol that appeals to me most in that I have learned to chip off extraneous parts as I journey.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**History, symbolism, Brotherhood, and, honestly, secrecy.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Generally, yes. Considering where a man is first made a Mason, combined with the fact that we (ostensibly) take good men and make them better, the 28 days in between degrees should be sufficient time to learn the details.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Most certainly, yes. We focus on the catechisms and leave the rest. What is left is even more important in many ways. Over time, a Mason that attends regularly will gather the information, but a structured program will certainly help them sooner and better.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No. It is not our job to improve Masonry. This would only be beneficial in increasing the number of men that hold dues cards, not the number of Freemasons. However, I do believe that the “Mason at Sight” prerogative of the Grand Lodge should be honored, so long as it follows the format described by Mackey in his Landmarks.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Education is perhaps the single most important issue when it comes to retention. Too many Masons know little about the Fraternity and lose interest.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**In a sense, yes. But to our Brethren. Our symbols and our documents speak primarily to self-improvement and charity to Brothers, widows and orphans. We are not to be a charitable organization for the world at large.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I first ask them about belief in God, and their age if it is not obvious that they are old enough. I tell them that we do not recruit, that I will not invite them, but if they are interested in joining, they are welcome to ask me for a petition. I generally also give a short description of Masonry, saying things such as we strive for self-improvement, have lots of symbolism, and only look for good and upstanding, moral men.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Keith W. Gunkel**  
Years in Masonry: **10**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Orion Lodge No. 222 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My uncle, on my mother's side, was a big influence in my life. He was a Mason and a Shriner.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Evolving, and in a state of needed change for the betterment of the Fraternity.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has helped me practice patience, and to not let my emotions control me, but to stop and focus on the individual and the circumstances.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Brotherhood, ritual and education.**



5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**No. The process is rushed. It should be when the individual is ready and prepared.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. As in all stages in life or education, there are progressive levels to achieve. Learn to advance.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No, this does not benefit the Brother or the Fraternity.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**In any institution continual education is needed for the betterment of all.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, as the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Degrees make no mention of this. Only in the Master Mason Degree is this discussed, and then not as a reason.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**It is a daily exercise for betterment in oneself and family and friends.**



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Name: **Jake Vaughn**  
Years in Masonry: **19**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Symsonia Lodge No. 917  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I knew several men who were Masons. My father, uncle, grandfather and many men whom I respected.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I think that the current state of Freemasonry is good. I know that the pandemic has hit our numbers. Many Brothers have lost the battle with the virus, and the virus has also hurt our numbers showing up to meetings. On the other hand, this pandemic has sparked an interest in Freemasonry that I have never seen. I see so much degree work in my area; more than I am accustomed to seeing or hearing about.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Freemasonry has given me a group of guys that are like minded individuals. These men have, and continue to, make me strive to be a better man. That may be as easy as serving on a committee and taking a task and completing it.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The brotherly love that is had between all of the Brothers in my Lodge and the Fraternity as a whole is second to none. Being able to go anywhere and know I can find someone that will gladly help me in any way.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I do think that is enough time. Not many are able to do it in that amount of time, but I do think it is adequate.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I do think it would be beneficial. You never stop learning in Freemasonry, if you are doing it right. An education program might fast track a Brother's learning.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I don't see a problem with one-day classes for organizations, but I do not agree with having a one-day class in the Blue Lodge. I feel that everything starts with the Blue Lodge, and that advancement should be slowed down for the Brother to learn about the Degree in which he is in.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Not sure if it does. I believe that if a Brother wants to be a Mason, he will participate and attend Lodge. If a Brother gets in and gets out, I don't think his heart was really in it from the start.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I don't. It is a big part of it, but I'm active in my Lodge and feel there is a lot more to it. If the outside world sees us as a primarily charitable organization, I say, "good." I would much rather hear that, than someone spreading rumors of what our organization is not. The Shriners are looked at by the outside world that way. Don't hear anyone saying anything bad about the Shriners, so if our Lodges can get that reputation, I think it would be a good thing.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Ask. Ask questions to Masons that you may know. They will tell you what they can and help you understand what the organization is about.**



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Name: **Kevin Sullivan**  
Years in Masonry: **21**  
Lodge Name and Number: **St. Andrews Lodge No. 18  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Mostly curiosity on what it was all about, and why it was so secretive.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**The current Grand Lodge seems more focused on the “appearance” of being a Mason, instead of walking the walk. Dictating and mandating, rather than persuading and serving as good example themselves. Just my opinion.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has given me the opportunity to meet and talk to numerous people with whom I otherwise wouldn't have had the occasion to spend time. There are a great number of really good guys that I have only met because of the fraternal tie. This has been surprisingly enjoyable for me, because I normally don't like people.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**History of the Craft. Records of its possible beginnings. Stories of its values being put into practical use in real life. Legends.**



5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**It depends on the person and how much time he has to invest. I still learn stuff about the first two degrees, even after being in for 21 years. It would have been nice to cover more information on each Degree as you go through, but spending too much time on each Degree, trying to learn everything before moving on would probably discourage a lot of people.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely. It would supply a basic education for the members just starting out, without slowing down their progress to becoming a Master Mason. After receiving the Third Degree, it would also provide interesting content to discuss among ourselves. It's good to look forward to learning something, rather than just having a monthly business meeting, then going home.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I think it only adds numbers of members to our rosters. It could be good if the one-day program is expanded for the people going through it. But that would require a detailed plan that every Lodge probably wouldn't carry through.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Without the education aspect, I feel that most members will lose interest rather quickly. Some like the social aspect, some the comfort of**

**tradition and ceremony. Some only want a reason to get out of the house. I like the education part.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. I think its primary function would be to have older men serve as guides and mentors to younger men. Being an example of what a good, responsible man should be, regardless of his race, class, background, economic or social position.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Keep an open mind, but be a critical thinker as you digest information. Sometimes the lessons click right away. Sometimes they stew in your head for a while before they make sense. Ask questions. Be patient. Masonry takes time to soak into your being.**

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### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Jack Lenzer**  
Years in Masonry: **15**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Nova Caesarea Harmony  
Lodge No. 2 (OH)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**A friend at work. Then a litany of coincidences, which revealed a cousin, who, being of the old notions, had never spoken to me about Masonry. He was called by a Mason he raised to tell him (he had been at my raising). After that, my cousin always had words of encouragement about the Craft.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**We have a lot of changing and work to bring it up today, without sanitizing the true meaning of what often happens in these situations.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**In has instituted a sense of confidence in doing a better job, allowing me to be a servant to my fellow man. That is something I needed to learn.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The physical work of getting the Lodge in shape. I have always been a doer. I'd like to have more time to learn the ritual. For me, at my age, it is a struggle, but I keep at it.**



5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**No. I think you need more time to be less of a puppet in just memorizing and regurgitating it.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes, to allow for the to the Fraternity and its many ways. You also need time to acclimate to the people around you.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Yes, they are in a way. It's what you do after that is more important. It is a detriment to Masonry – like a revolving door.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**It teaches the candidate the why, more so than the how.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**In some cases it can be. I think we get too caught up in the feel good of charity. We forget we are supposed to make men better in all ways.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Take your time. It is not an event, but more a process in learning.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Brian L. Carroll**  
Years in Masonry: **6**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Good Faith Lodge No. 95  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Not knowing much about Freemasonry, other than what I had seen in movies, my curiosity brought me to the organization to learn what Masons do.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**In bad shape. Men may meet and men may act unified, but, truthfully, in my opinion, men show up just to show up and mostly complain. The groups are those of old thinking who don't want change and this mentality will not bring in new members.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**I have used Masonry and the connection I have made to make self-assessments of myself, and using the knowledge from the men with whom I associate within Masonry to pick up their habits and learn from their ways.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The brotherhood of those who are passionate about Masonry. By having passion, and these men helping to preserve the meaning of Masonry, it has helped me to grow to be better than I was prior to joining.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I don't think so, but I also don't believe a set timeline for advancement is what we should do with our newly obligated Brothers. Each man is different, and some could come into the organization using the working tools more so than others. So no, I don't agree with timelines for advancement through the Degrees.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I do think it's 100% beneficial. Lodge officers and members should absolutely work with new Brethren to bring them to Lodge standards. But Lodges should have those standards well established. And, unfortunately, this is not happening.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I do not. As someone who went through the Degrees at a decent pace, I don't feel that I learned enough about the work needed prior to giving my proficiency.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I like to hope that Masonic education gives the members something to think about. We all have enough meetings in our lives that have no value. Until we began having education, the Lodge meetings were no value meetings.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I did at first, until I learned more about the intent of the working tools. I do believe we can be charitable, but we should focus on ourselves, developing ourselves and by becoming better men this should contribute to charity.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Find the right Lodge in your area. Ask questions, and find out how active your Lodge is and how healthy the Lodge is. Don't be afraid to challenge the status quo.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Phillip Blair**  
Years in Masonry: **5**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Paintsville Lodge No. 381  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My father and grandfather were both Masons. My grandmother was in the Eastern Star. I remember them attending meetings when I was much younger. Both passed before I was “grown.” I remember my grandfather’s Masonic rites. This all put Freemasonry on my radar – I joined to see why they had joined.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I am guarded, but hopeful about the future of Freemasonry. While I wish the state of our Lodges was better, I am satisfied that the loss of membership is stabilizing, and most Lodges are full of good men working to improve themselves and their communities. I think Masonic education is our key to the future – we as Lodges have a duty to make good men better, and that means doing more than just saying it. It is incumbent upon us to provide avenues that aid in self-improvement.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**If I am candid, Freemasonry has not taught me any principles or virtues that I did not already know. Freemasonry has provided me an opportunity to explore those principles and virtues in ways that I did not realize. Freemasonry has provided me an opportunity to grow as a husband, father, son, Christian and man. Freemasonry has created in**



**me a desire for understanding and self-improvement. Central to that is a desire to ask questions and seek answers to things I had often overlooked.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Self-understanding and self-improvement, I believe, are Freemasonry's greatest gifts to the Craft. If a man is asking questions and seeking answers about his own life, then morality, community service and growth will follow as the natural progression of self-improvement.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I think it is possible, but unlikely. To adequately take in the principles and lessons of each Degree requires reflection, thought and discussion. I am not sure that can properly happen in 28 days.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely yes. A dear friend of mine says Freemasonry is like having a back yard full of buried treasure – you will never find anything if you don't dig. A well-structured program would help develop the mysteries of Freemasonry within a man, and as I said above, everything else will follow suit.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I do not. I don't believe that allows ample time for development and reflection.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I believe this is the single biggest influence on retention. If we, as a Craft, provide opportunities for knowledge and education, our Members will desire to learn and grow. Knowledge will increase dedication to Freemasonry, which will likewise aid in retention.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I do not. While charity is an important part of what we do, I believe Freemasonry is primarily devoted to the self-improvement of an individual man. Charity will follow.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Freemasonry will give to you what you seek from it. Find an active Lodge. Join, ask questions and reflect – the rest will find you.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **James D. Glover**  
Years in Masonry: **45**  
Lodge Name and Number: **John Jay Lodge No. 653  
(NY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Fellowship with some people I respected.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Declining. People seem to be too busy to join or participate.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Taught me how to speak in front of large groups. Gave me confidence. Helped me earn the respect of others. Taught me leadership skills. Gained many new friends I would have never come in contact with.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Friendships. Leadership skills learned and increased self-confidence.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, if they apply themselves. For some it takes longer.**



6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely. I spend lots of time educating and mentoring my Lodge's candidates, as well as those of other Lodges.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No. They miss out on a great deal. We had this in our jurisdiction and while 2400 men joined – 3 years later less than a few hundred stayed. The cost of the one-day class was more than the initiation fees. Those that took it did so because they either can't memorize or don't have the time, which means that they will not come to meetings or become officers. Only instance where it makes sense is for elderly fathers of current Masons who wish to join, and it would otherwise be difficult.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Absolutely necessary to keep them interested, unless they joined for the wrong reason, in which case we don't need them.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**While definitely charitable, the friendships and leadership skill development are more important.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**It is a patriotic organization that improves members by teaching them how to get along with others, develop leadership skills making them better people.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

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Name: **James Shockley**  
Years in Masonry: **11**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Ledbetter Lodge No. 952  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I had seen what Masonry did for my brother and just felt that I needed that as well. I also saw the brotherhood that my brother had with other Masons and felt this would be good for me as well.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**There is a slight decline in membership, and honestly, I believe we need to look inward to see why that is an issue.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Just being around other Brothers and seeing their habits are far greater than most think. A Mason's habits are good, and so it would only make me, or any other Brother, a better man.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Education within and because, education. You can learn enough.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I feel they can be if they have the initiative to do so. I feel this shows that they have an interest in something and want to be more educated on it.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely. As I stated earlier, you can never learn enough. Education is one of the incentives of becoming a Mason.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not. There is a lot of information in each Degree that a Brother will need to retain, and can't do this without the assistance of a lecture. You can't take all of that information in one day.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think that education has a huge influence on retention of Masons for the simple reason that Brothers want to learn more and become a better man. If Brothers aren't getting this education, and are going to Lodge to open, pay bills and go home, then all interest in Masonry could be lost for these Brothers.**



9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I would consider it as a primary care of organization, but there are many people and communities that we can help with funds raised by Masons. I think Masonry honestly helps a good man become a better man, and one way this can be accomplished is by helping charities.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**That could be a lengthy answer, but to sum it all up, if someone asks me about Freemasonry, I as one question and give one statement. My question is, why do you seek Freemasonry and what do you think it is going to do for you? My statement is, if you feel that this is something that you want to get into, then why don't you join me on a regular stated meeting and have dinner with us and talk with the other Brothers that are present.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Jason Wilson**  
Years in Masonry: **6**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Willis Stewart Lodge No. 224 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Many of my mentors over the years were Masons.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Declining.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**To continue and try to improve my walk as a man and Christian.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Fellowship, and the ability to learn more about Masonry.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, if the individual is dedicated to his study and being prepared properly.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**There is supposed to be a level of support for that individual to begin with. With that being said, a more structured program could be a vast benefit.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Possibly, if done correctly.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Currently, none. I think it needs to be redirected to more relevant topics.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I believe so. Many of our Lodges participate in charitable causes.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I wish I had joined many years before I did.**



# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **David E. Bird**  
Years in Masonry: **10**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Good Faith Lodge No. 95  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Freemasonry is a family tradition over several generations.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Shrinking, but viable.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has played a role in bringing me closer to God and setting the priorities in my life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**A. Fellowship with other Masons; and  
B. Education.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**No, a man is adequately prepared only after he has demonstrated proficiency in the use of the working tools of each Degree. One month is only enough time to memorize the catechism of each Degree.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**It could be, depending on the content and means of delivery.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No. It does not allow enough time to do the work and demonstrate mastery of the same.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Very big influence on retention based upon my personal experience and the apparent impact it has had on the Freemasons in my proximity.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. We are a fraternity that focuses on improving its members. Charity is one of the things in which we engage as good men.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Why do you want to become a Freemason?**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Tim O’Hair**  
Years in Masonry: **5**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Wisdom Lodge No. 202 (CA)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I first thought of joining 20-odd years ago, due to the historical correlations and the fact that my father had been aided (scholarship) by the Scottish Rite. I regret that I did not follow through until the mid-2010s, at which time I felt the need to be part of a society, a philosophy, which exists to bring people together at a time in which there was so much division and polarization.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Dim, but alive. My experience can only be related anecdotally, of course. As admitted by the UGLE, the Fraternity allowed itself, for too long, to be defined by the outside. Freemasonry and its Brethren turned inward, no longer active in the community, in the world (despite those charges of domination!). What I see is a group of super active Masons, active in various bodies, but not known for anything great outside the Craft – which means the activity is not affecting perception one iota. Then, potential brothers knock on the door, don’t gain a true sense of what is “inside,” don’t have their expectations checked and addressed, and, more frequently than not, disappear (not for me). There is also this odd branch of “poverty Masonry,” so fearful of any charge of elitism; they all want to give the milk away for free, so to speak. And then the complete neglect of the obligation to self-improve. You know, it all smacks of Plato’s cave allegory.**



3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Freemasonry has led me to additional courses of study, both Masonic and non-Masonic. I have taken courses in Philosophy and Theology. I have delved into the teachings of the Degrees, and I have tried to impart them into my life. I decided I needed to be part of the community at large – so I became involved in Scouting (now a trained ASM!) and took roles with two local school boards. I am trying to make a difference as I can. I think I’m also a better husband and father.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**I am drawn to the philosophical and historical aspects, even more so now that I have studied a bit more. I like how the Craft can challenge us. I also love the notion of “travel,” as I am able to visit other countries (and look forward to more post-COVID). While I appreciate the social aspects, they are not the main draw for me.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**No. I do not think there can be adequate contemplation, study, or preparation (in general, there are always exceptions) in that short period, especially with how stretched people are for time. This is proven time and again as the calls on a Brother’s time, the length of their cable-tow, is often the rationale for non-participation.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**With this I take more of an issue. While I might be amenable to recommended studies, a “structured” program seems to fly in the face of free will – it is important not only for a Brother to knock of their own accord, but also to advance in the same manner. Some choose, some do not ... but wise officers and Masters should know what Masonic labor is, and be able to instruct accordingly (in fact, many officers and leaders may be the ones in need of instruction ...).**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not, with a coda. I believe the Blue Lodge system should be methodical, and the proficiency system should be more than the recital of a piece of the obligation. Some complain that the AASR is similarly rushed (the old fire house saw) – but, having been instructed in the Blue Lodge how to receive further light, the AASR aspirant is able to “study” and look deeper (and there are the Master Craftsman and Guthrie programs for those who want them, not mandatory ...).**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**It would make sense that those seeking and/or receiving education would be more likely to be retained, but I haven’t studied the matter, and correlation is not causation.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, and too many do. My instinct is that this stems from a misread of the word “charity,” as well as the explosion of the institutional framework in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Somehow it was an easier “sell” (or maybe a need) to be able to show outsiders, “look, it’s not all about us! We aren’t selfish!”**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Right now? Do it for the right reasons, there’s a lot to be gained, but (unfortunately) temper your expectations. We don’t have too many (any) Washingtons, Roosevelts, Trumans or Bolivars in the ranks right now – but that doesn’t mean we can’t develop some if we get our act together. Hope springs eternal.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Clint Jones**  
Years in Masonry: **6**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Bowling Green Lodge No. 73  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**To carry on a family tradition, as well as to meet likeminded men with high morals; and to be involved with what I think is the greatest organization you can be a member of, other than a church.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**In a severe state of decline that needs to be addressed.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**I have met so many men that are the absolute finest people I've ever met. I have also been so influenced by these men to try to always be the best that I can be, and to remember my obligation and be just and upright before God and man.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The quality of men that the Fraternity attracts, and the traveling aspect I love the most.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I do believe that is adequate time. I believe if a man is truly interested in Masonry, he will be prepared.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I think informal education in Lodge is much more interesting. I do not necessarily think a structured curriculum is always the best method of learning.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not. I do not believe one-day classes benefit anyone, or give men the time to soak in the Degrees.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think the more men learn about the history of our Fraternity, the more interest they have in it.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I do not. I view Masonry as primarily a Fraternity, or social club, with charity as its second goal. Unfortunately, most Lodges struggle so much with money that they do not get to do as much charity as they would like to do.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**You will get far more out of it then you put into it, and it is a decision you will never regret.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **James Rex Goodrum III**  
Years in Masonry: **8**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Simpson Benevolent Lodge  
No. 177 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I wanted to be part of a group. The “mysteries” of Freemasonry drew my attention, and the research I did thereafter lead me to eventually joining.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Not well. Here in Kentucky, I feel that if you don't live close to Louisville or Lexington, then you are at a great disadvantage in participation. You can't take part in the Grand Lodge functions, and even many other groups of education aren't in many areas. On top of that, the fellowship portion of Masonry is being restricted among many Lodges as people rush meetings in order to get home. No fellowship, or limited before and after. Due to rushing out, Masonic Education is a no-go for the handful of people that actually do show up (6-7) for us on a given night.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Self-reflection. Deeper caring for those around me. Helped in giving me practice talking in front of groups of people, which has been very beneficial. Has made me feel a bit better about myself in general.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Fellowship and education. They hold equal value to me. I want to have more friends and just “hang out” sometimes, and feel part of a group/family. I want to look deeper into the past and present events of Masonry itself. Currently, I feel that I am having to move fundraising to the front of the list simply because neither of the other two are happening, and it is always a fight to keep the Lodge open with the rise in prices.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes. I say so because I feel that the basics of the ritual are what is needed to be known to get from one Degree to the next. However, I believe that once people become a Master Mason, they don't then take the time to seek more detailed knowledge of the current and prior.**

**I look at it as if earning an actual college degree. When you are in your undergrad, you might take a couple of courses on a subject, so you don't know everything. You are supposed to go in depth at your graduate level education. The Master Mason Degree should be your graduate level degree that now, with all the knowledge allowed to you in Masonry, you can adequately study.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. I am actually trying to find and set one of these up for my Lodge as a personal endeavor. I would really like to know that new members have a better opportunity than I did myself at gaining knowledge from the Lodge. I have not found a program like this already in place.**



7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I would not want this for the Blue Lodge Degrees. I wouldn't have a problem with one-day classes for the Rites, as long as the meaning and lessons were gone over more in depth at regular meetings. I guess what I mean to say is that one-days are okay, but the follow up by the Craft is not.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I have been looking over a lot of surveys from the past few decades in an attempt to both figure out what to do to build my Lodge back, as well as to see what has been the constant factor. Fellowship and Masonic Education have been at the top of every one of them. It is what I lack at my Lodge, and what I am craving in a sense. I believe it would go a long way for all of us.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, I don't. While we give much to charity, I feel that most of what we do is raise money for ourselves to keep the doors open. We always want to give, but are in a bind where we can't, or can't give as much. If we were a primarily charitable organization, then we would hear new candidates say they are wanting to join to earn money for charities. Typically, they don't say that. They say they want to be part of something. Masonry is to make good men better, we say. Masonry, to me, is supposed to be an organization that does that through fellowship and education, which in return would lead to charity.**



10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I would tell them to contact a Lodge near them, or aid in finding a contact, and talk with them. I would tell him to know what he wants, or what interests him, beforehand, so that he can ask direct questions. At that point, I would say to stop researching Masonry online, unless it is a very obvious website dedicated to the Craft, as there are so many falsehoods and conspiracies that they wouldn't know what was right and what was misinformation.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **George Cowan**  
Years in Masonry: **33**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Kalispell Lodge No. 42 (MT)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My father and uncle were Masons and Shriners, and both were admirable people.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**As others concentrate on bringing Freemasonry back to what it was in the 1800s, I have chosen to concentrate on each new member and trying to solidify his reason and future in the Fraternity.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**I have seen the Craft from many sides and have learned to subdue my passions, making discussion much calmer, and understanding what various members are desiring from their memberships. In this way, they can be who and what they envision as their goal, and I can add to their quest by pointing out the niceties on the way. I hope this makes them stronger and deeper and fulfills my desire to educate as to the venues they might neglect.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**If man is a point, then he has the ability to grow to fill his circumscribed circle. Each man, not the Lodge, must advance, and that is what keeps me talking to all.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I don't judge a person's potential by his memory skill (one element of advancement) or his verve to complete it all ("It's all over after the Third"). I have seen those ready to prove in 48 hours, and those who gave up after a year, but they were both Masons. I believe that the philosophy must be that once a Master, be ready to expand and learn more with understanding of how it fits in the universe.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**As Master this year, I will not allow any signatures on a petition without that person having sat at the same dinner table with the man at least three times. Much can be had from categorizing his questions. Once put on the road of research, our Lodge continually asks each, old and new, "What have you found?" As a result, we have a signup list to organize who will teach each night.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Most of our one-day wonders were only passing through to the Shrine. Are Shriners good Masons? Does anyone profit by helping others? By encouraging new acquaintances to join the Shrine by becoming Masons, it does not mean they have forsaken Freemasonry. I think many have**



**neglected to ask Shriners if they feel Freemasonry is valuable rather than just evaluating their times in attendance. (I have demitted from the Shrine, myself.)**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Much of the education has a link to physical items: the layout, the jewels, etc. Anyone who travels and visits a Temple then has a link and a connection with that faraway Lodge, whether they attend a meeting or not. Each temple reinforces the education and keeps a man learning.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**A lot of areas and groups need assistance and Freemasonry gets a boost each time a single member or a Lodge helps those requiring need. For some, charity is the primary and they would not attend if they could not see charity at work. But Freemasonry has that ability to feed all types of men, and none of the facets are primary. There are three lights on the altar, but none are qualified by their position, size, order, or importance. Neither should an element be preached as primary.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Interest is where it starts, and only interest. All join for a stated reason (relative, internet, friend, research of truth and falsity), but none really know what they want until they have tasted the Degrees and understood what each offered. At that point the decision becomes important: some finding a void in the area of their interest and falling away; some adopting a taught direction; some joining a bandwagon they wished to find. If the interested person finds the members of the Lodge (only those who attend) as admirable, he may have a good journey, no matter what his initial stimulus was.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Allan Clark**  
Years in Masonry: **55**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Swigert Middletown Lodge  
No. 218 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Eight generations of Masonic DNA in my family.**

**My father was a 65-year Blue Lodge Mason, and my grandfather was a 55-year Blue Lodge Mason. Both were Past Masters.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Dying a slow and painful death. It is strong within the current membership, but new members are not refilling the death rolls.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has strengthened me in every way over the years, and kept me focused on the 12 points of the Scout law, which are to be "Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent." I have always revered these principles since becoming an Eagle Scout in 1956.**

**Freemasonry has also kept me focused on being honest and fair in the game of life, and treating others as I want to be treated. Freemasonry, Church and Scouting are the best pursuits for men through life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Brotherly love, honesty and truth make you walk uprightly before God and man.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Some jurisdictions require 1-year between Degrees for candidates to study and understand what the Degree is teaching us.**

**From a theoretical point of view, I agree with this thinking. But, from a practical standpoint, this would only exacerbate the current problem of new membership.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes, a kind of mentorship program would be excellent, if we could get volunteers to man it (big problem, these days).**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**NO, NO, NO. It would blur the meaning of each Degree.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Actually, very little due to such poor attendance at each meeting.**



9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, I think we do charitable works to gain visibility in our communities, and as such I think our communities view us as just another Lions Club, Rotary Club or other service club, which we are not. We are a Fraternity of friends and Brothers dedicated to making good men better.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Get to know a long-time Mason. Have him explain what Masonry means to him and how it has helped him in life. Have him introduce you to other Masons and try to understand their faith and commitment to the Fraternity to see if it fits for you. Then, and only then, if he is ready, he will request a petition.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Timothy J. Berry**  
Years in Masonry: **26**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Halfway Lodge No. 852 (KY),  
Loving Lodge No. 323 (KY),  
Marlin White Lodge of  
Research (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Having joined DeMolay in high school, and with my father and grandfather being Masons, I knew somewhat what Masonry entailed.**

**Once I felt worthy, I asked for a petition.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Although not strong in number, I feel the quality of the membership is strong, as far as charity.**

**The quality of the Degree work is average mainly due to the amount of members that can confer the work, and the membership wanting to “shorten” the ritual.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has showed me that my actions reflect on the others in the Lodge and has, I believe, made me a better husband, father and person, in general.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Charity and fellowship.**

**Charity, because through discussion within the Lodge, we can determine who we help.**

**Fellowship, because I have met some of the best people I know and have made friends with people I probably never would have met if I had never joined.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, but it depends on the lecturer/mentor.**

**I had a great lecturer. He educated me as we went along on the meanings of each Degree and the workings of the Lodge.**

**I have tried to do that with every Brother that I have worked with.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes, I do.**

**Having experienced a great lecturer/mentor, I believe it was a very beneficial experience in my Masonic journey. He is a very skilled Mason and taught me stuff that I try to pass on.**



7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No, I don't.**

**Society is becoming too much "drive-thru." Meaning that things are being handed out without working for it.**

**It seems that Masonry is losing too much of its tradition in order to appease people in order to gain membership. I would rather have quality instead of quantity.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**First, we need to find out why the candidate/members want/wanted to join.**

**The Educational Program needs to have different avenues to suit the candidate(s) needs/wants. Be it historical, charity, fellowship, leadership, etc.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Yes, although it seems that some people are using it to "pat themselves on the back," or show people what they did.**

**The Masonry I was taught as a youngster and my early years was that it was to be done anonymously.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Why, and does your family support you in your decision to join?**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **John W. Adkins II**  
Years in Masonry: **8**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Pewee Valley Lodge No. 829  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My dad, and a good friend.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I see positive changes within the Fraternity, and my own Lodge has seen a growth with good men, genuinely interested in the Craft. I do, however, see room for improvement with a focus on education as the greatest need.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**The lessons that Freemasonry teaches, and the life-long friendships have been invaluable to me. Often, I check myself when doing things to make sure I'm doing the right thing. Also, having something to focus my efforts on, such as ritual and learning, has helped me find a new focus in my life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The educational and philosophical aspects have been most interesting to me. I've always been a fan of history, and Masonry has opened new doors for me in that regard.**

**I also enjoy the fellowship and the friendships that I have made along the way, as well as an outlet to be more involved in my community.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I honestly think those time limits may be too short. There is so much to explore, discover and learn in all three Degrees, that unless you are really zealous in your pursuits, it's hard to take it all in. I think a longer, slower approach would make the Degrees more effective.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely! I've seen too many in the Fraternity that know too little about it. We've been working hard the last two years in our Lodge to make sure our new members understand the work and can relate it to their own lives. This has made our latest members stronger Brothers, and more eager to be actively involved. Personally, I believe that there is no such thing as too much education.**



7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I think these methods are good for dollars in the short-term, but bad for creating well-rounded and educated Brothers. In my opinion, it cheapens the experience and devalues Freemasonry.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think it is one of the key factors in long-term retention, and the only way to build a strong Fraternity. It also makes better Masons, in my opinion.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I do not, but I see many other Brothers who do. I'd like to see Masonry get back to its beginnings with a more philosophical and educational approach. I think charity is a valuable lesson, and shouldn't be ignored, but I do not feel like it should be the primary focus.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**It will be the most rewarding and life changing experience you can achieve.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Charles Christophe**  
Years in Masonry: **2**  
Lodge Name and Number: **independent Royal Arch  
Lodge No. 2 (NY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Masonic principles; Masonic way of life; Masonic morale; changing from good to better.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I can only talk about New York, because I am in this jurisdiction. It's very good. A lot of interest, and candidates are knocking on our door.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Yes, every day; I implement its principles in my personal and in business life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Friendship, caring, charity.**

**Because they make you a better man.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, for most candidates.**

**However, others (small percentage) cannot get ready due to various reasons – sudden family issue, too short time for memorization (prep for proficiency), business issues.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. A good introduction to Masonry and good vetting of candidates help in the process and the retention of membership in the Lodge.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not!**

**It's a perversion, commercialization of the process. The candidate must go through the well-established, traditionally approved procedure.**

**Can't become a good member if you are not committed and qualified.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Extremely helpful!**

**My opinion, avoid lectures discussing decline or currently trending issues in Masonry if you have non-Masons present. That will push them**



**away; [they will] dismiss the Craft even before they know what it is all about.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, the charity is a part of Freemasonry, and it's a voluntary function. Not all Brothers are able or willing due to various reasons.**

**Freemasonry is well known about the generous charitable work, but it's not what the Craft is defined for.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I will answer their questions and determine if they are ready for it. Also, I would carefully vet them before going further in order to see if they are qualified.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **John Jolley**  
Years in Masonry: **49**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Barker Lodge No. 129 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My father was a Mason.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**On a downward trend.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**I want to put everyone as an equal.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Fellowship among Brothers that extends beyond the Lodge.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I think it comes down to a desire. Some can do it in 28 days, some in 28 minutes, some it will take 28 months. Bottom line, one month seems to work well.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I think it depends on the man. Having a program available that the Brothers can access would help.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No. Most men petition based on a relationship that was developed by someone within a Lodge. I would like to see the time to develop some impressions that are not there on a one-day class.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**A big influence. Masonry is very interesting and tells many stories about everyday people.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Always ranked Masonry as high on charity. Not so much monetary, but as giving of their time to people and places.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**What brought you to ask that question? Was it something positive that you heard? Tell him the qualifications.**



# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Jeffrey Richason**  
Years in Masonry: **9**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Morrison Lodge No. 76 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I wanted to improve myself and be a part of something bigger than myself and make a difference.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Good. I see more Lodges active in the community and membership growing.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has enabled me to see beyond myself and have an impact in the community.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The ritual work – I like the tradition and ceremony – knowing that we do, all do and have done.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Possibly. I feel this is variable to each candidate and how they learn and accept the knowledge. Their coach / mentor should help judge when they are ready for the next Degree.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. Knowledge and understanding are always beneficial. Anything to help prepare and EA might increase their awareness of the next step they are taking. One example is the Room of Reflection. This was originally part of the EA Degree. As for after the MM Degree, there used to be more after it, before being absorbed into York Rite or Scottish Rite, such as the Royal Arch, from my understanding.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No, they take away from the candidate the uniqueness of their journey. I feel these “one-day Degrees and done” are an insult to the candidate and only designed to boost membership and be a shortcut to the Craft so they can skimp on their duties.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I feel that Masonic Education has some, but not much, influence on retention. The Brothers who want to learn, will, regardless.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Yes. From my experience, we give far more than we receive.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I usually try to have a conversation with them to learn their reasoning and interests. I explain my own experience and try to get them to see the obligations they would be taking.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Dylan Baker**  
Years in Masonry: **3**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Breathitt Lodge No. 649  
(KY); Booneville Lodge No.  
939 (KY); Henry Bannister  
Grant Lodge of Research  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I had a great uncle, the late James Maggard, of Hyden Lodge No. 664, who was more like a grandfather to me due to the fact that he played a huge role in raising my father. I spent an abundant amount of time talking with him while growing up, simply for the reason that he was very reserved and hard to figure out. He was retired from the United States Army, and would often tell me stories of how he and his friends from the Army, even after years and years of retirement, would still communicate and keep up with one another. Going into high school, I decided to join ROTC in order to learn more about the military and the camaraderie that my uncle spoke so much about. I thoroughly enjoyed the program, especially when I started earning awards. The first distinctive awards that I earned was a patriotism award that was given by the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. This award included a very nice bronze medal with a purple ribbon, a certificate, and letter explaining why and how I earned this award. I always knew that my uncle was a Mason, but I never really explored what Freemasonry was. I began researching the greatest fraternity in the world. I learned that I had to be 18 years of age in order to join, but I noticed a link to DeMolay's webpage, and began researching it. I decided, with my uncle's help, to petition DeMolay. My uncle and I went suit shopping and he spent many late nights driving to and from DeMolay events and meetings. He always drove me to learn the ritual and keep progressing. After a few**

years went by, I finally turned 18, and by that time I hadn't forgotten about Freemasonry, but became too busy with being an 18-year-old to begin the process. I did, however, ask for a petition and got my first and second line signers, so I would be good to go when I was ready to return it. Around a year later, I returned it and began my journey. My uncle wasn't able to come watch any of my Degree work, but when I confronted him with something new that I'd learned, he'd say, "You don't know if I'm a Mason or not. Come back and talk to me after your Third." I didn't waste any time studying and returning my proficiencies, and I after I was raised, I went back to see him. We talked for hours and hours about it, and I was given some very good and wise counsel by a very wise, very good man, who was made better by this Fraternity.

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

To many, Freemasonry is dying. In my opinion, Freemasonry is what you make it. If you are a light to others, Freemasonry will flourish. If you are not a light to others, Freemasonry will not flourish. We have a duty to our Brothers, even those who do not attend Lodge and are considered to be members, rather than Masons. It is possible that the reason they are considered as such is because those considered to be Masons aren't fulfilling their obligation to those Brothers (something of which we are all guilty). I honestly think if we, as a whole, get back to being Masons, our Fraternity will grow rather than die.

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

In a sense, being part of an institution that is as ancient as Freemasonry, and has the morals that we do, is quite humbling in itself. Helping those in need is something that I will never fail to do as long as I have that ability. Freemasonry doesn't just give us the opportunity to assist others, but holds us to that standard, if the assistance is within the lengths of our capabilities. Being held to that standard and conducting my life as a Mason has been very humbling and beneficial to me.



4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Nearly everything we, as Freemasons, do, relates back to our obligations. That being said, our ritual is something that I take great pride in. Another reason that the ritual is so, one, important to me, and two, so fascinating to me is because Brothers from ages ago went through the same thing we did when being initiated, passed and raised, as well as having some of the same practices we have in Lodge today.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I do think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within one lunar month. When going through the Degrees, I returned my proficiencies at the next communication, and received the next Degree at the following, which would fulfill the requirement. With the help of some Brothers, I learned the lectures and obligations very quickly. I credit this not only to the Brothers that helped me study, but to my motivation and my need for more light. If a Brother has it in his heart, 28 days can seem way too long. Not to be misunderstood, I think a Brother should wait 28 days before advancing just to let everything sink in and to keep him from being overwhelmed.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Masonic education us a must. If a Brother has someone to ask questions to, and depend on, while advancing through the Degrees, that Brother is going to learn more than he would, had he gone through by himself without any assistance and without anyone to depend on. I am speaking from experience on this one. Thankfully, I had a few different Brothers that taught me a lot prior to going through my EA, of course I did not understand anything that they were trying to tell me until I went through the Degree, but it showed me at an early stage that these were**



**going to be the people that I could ask questions and could rely on through my journey, and thankfully, they are still here for me in that manner, and now, I for them. Every Lodge should have some sort of structured REQUIRED Masonic education program.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I honestly do not see how a Brother could benefit from advancing through the Degrees rapidly. As I stated earlier, I wanted to advance a lot quicker than 28 days, but shortly after being raised, and, of course, in retrospect, I knew that I would not have gained or retained any knowledge whatsoever if I had. This is just my opinion, and others may feel differently, but sometimes it is hard to retain information within 28 days. I couldn't imagine anything shorter.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**There is much to learn after going through your Degrees. It is common practice for Lodges to throw newly raised Brothers amongst the Craft and that's it for the rest of his Masonic career. In order for someone to grow, advance and be inclined to stay with it, a Brother has to have something ahead to look forward to. One of those things for me is Masonic education. It seems I have an ongoing desire for more light, and I always look forward to communications in the event that an educational topic is introduced, and a good discussion ensues. As Master this year, I have had some type of Masonic education to introduce at every meeting, and normally a really good group of Brothers will discuss the topic until a final verdict is agreed upon and the loose end I intentionally left is tied back. Practices such as this will allow Brothers to keep thinking and have them ready to come back and learn more. I think that Masonic education should be a requirement at every communication, because it does have a great influence on the retention of members within Freemasonry.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Yes, I do. Our institution provides charity in many different ways. Freemasonry instantly provided me with a different outlook on life as a whole, that in itself is a charity. We are charged with helping, aiding and assisting all Brothers in need, their widows and orphans. That in itself is a charity. We are a charitable institution, whether we realize it or not.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Freemasonry is what you make it, so give it your best and you'll profit from it, in one way or another. Freemasonry is one of the best things that has ever happened to me, and it has never let me down.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **C. R. Dunning, Jr.**  
Years in Masonry: **33**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Haltom City-Riverside Lodge  
No. 1331 (TX)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**The elders in my life who were Masons and the studies that I did convinced me Masonry was, at its deepest levels, an initiatic, contemplative, and transformative path of virtue and esoteric wisdom.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**We are in the wave of a renaissance, and we need to speak of it precisely as that – the Masonic Renaissance. In my 33 years, I have [seen] significantly positive change in Masonry reviving its philosophical and spiritual soul. Our numbers are seriously declining, and that is posing a lot of trouble, to be sure, but these problems are best understood as the symptoms of a re-birthing process. The Masonry of 50 years in the future will probably be much smaller, but it will be more vital, vibrant, and true to the teachings of its rituals and body of literature. The challenge of our current state is to make decisions and take actions that serve that vision, not merely to preserve the organizations and buildings we have inherited from past generations.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Countless! The teachings of Freemasonry are interwoven with every aspect of my personal existence. Masonry has provided a very rich fabric of symbolism, ritual and fellowship in which I have grown and continue to grow my understanding and expression of virtue,**



**philosophy, spirituality, and love. It has led me to continue to outgrow older, less enlightened conceptualizations of the world, human nature, the Divine, and my self. It has facilitated numerous new questions, epiphanies, awakenings, and other transformative experiences.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**What appeals to me most about our tradition is its holism and diversity. It offers a very rich palette of information and activities. It isn't just social, just philosophical, just spiritual, or just ritualistic. Furthermore, there are many different options within each of those four aspects. This diversity makes it possible for each of us to be nurtured by things that feel comfortable and pleasant while also being challenged to learn and grow through things that aren't as easy, familiar, or natural for us. Central and essential to all of this is Freemasonry's connection with the Divine and Its mysterious unifying presence in each of us and all of Nature.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**That all depends upon the expectations we have for our new members to really experience and develop what we teach in each Degree. The truth is that there is more than a lifetime's worth of learning and growth that can occur with any single Degree. We have to draw a line somewhere, so if we expect that a Brother has a basic familiarity with the myth, symbolism, and obligations of a Degree, that he knows enough about it to recognize where it points him for more learning and growth, then 28 days is probably about right on the average. But, if we expect him to actually demonstrate some of that learning and growth, then he will need more time, depending on how much is expected of him, and in what way he will have to demonstrate it. For example, if we expect a demonstration of further study and application in his life, then at some point it might be fitting for him to submit an essay or deliver an oral presentation in which he shows how he has developed an understanding of things and in what ways that has led to real changes in what he does**

**with his thoughts, feelings and behavior. For this kind of expectation, somewhere between 90 days to one year is probably necessary.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely! Some jurisdictions require at least some reading of their candidates for initiation and between Degrees, as well as catechisms between Degrees. Some even have small courses with readings and exams between Degrees. A few require some kind of essay or presentation as described in my previous response. The additional steps beyond the catechisms are great ideas because for too long we have simply provided a ritual experience and left it up to the individual to actually dig into the process of learning and growth, while at the same time \*only\* rewarding him for memorizing some things and taking organizational leadership roles. It's no wonder that we've struggled to produce men who are prepared to lead more enlightened, wiser, more beneficial, and impactful lives in the world outside of the Fraternity. It's also no wonder that we have burned out so many aspiring young Masons by piling on organizational roles and responsibilities and offering little more in return than ego-gratifying titles and slaps on the back.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**In cases where they are followed up with further education and expectations for learning, growth, and participation, I can see how they might be beneficial. However, to my knowledge, that is almost never the case. I've seen studies indicating that, in some cases, the percentage of dues-paying members, or even actively participating members, is roughly equivalent to those who have recently gone through more traditional processes. That doesn't surprise me because I think it points to how the traditional processes have themselves become so gutted and meaningless. On the whole, I think one-day classes and rapid advancement are just symptomatic of one or more of these diseases: (1) a failure to grasp what Freemasonry is really about; (2) a failure to have a realistically positive vision for the future of the Fraternity; and (3) a**



**misguided desperation to preserve the organizational structures of the past.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**All of the research I have seen says that it is vitally important. In one way, it's simply a matter of value. What makes Masonry worthy of a man's time and money? More candidates are coming in with expectations for education. So, if we provide it, they are more likely to stay. If we don't, they won't. More importantly, it's also a matter of integrity, of actually living up to the practices, principles, and ideals espoused in our rituals, of actually doing what they say we should be doing. When we lack that integrity, when we don't follow through to actually be what we say we are, then it's no surprise that new members would soon lose interest.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**That depends on what is meant by "charitable," and whether we're discussing what it often actually does versus what its ritual says it is meant to be.**

**Are we meant to be an organization primarily involved in providing financial and volunteer support to community projects like scholarships, schools, hospitals, shelters, etc.? No.**

**Can these things be a meaningful part of the Masonic experience? Yes, very much so.**

**But, if by "charitable" we mean an organization in which men freely give their time and energy to assist each other on the initiatic and contemplative path of psychological, philosophical, and spiritual enlightenment – charitable in the sense of "caritas," or unconditional love – then yes, yes, yes, that is what we are called to do!**



10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**First, learn as much as you can about Freemasonry before you petition, but don't read the ritual exposures. Give yourself the special experience of going into your initiation without fully knowing what to expect. Read books on the history, symbolism, and the philosophy of Masonry and talk to Masons. Get your own sense of the whole scope of what Masonry offers, and what about that seems most interesting and challenging to you. Try to clarify why you want to be a Mason, and what your own vision for learning and growth as a Mason could be. Understand and welcome the possibility of your vision changing as you progress. Let go of your personal biases when it comes to religion and politics, and prepare yourself to welcome genuine affection and respect with men who believe, worship, and vote very differently from you. If it's possible, meet with Masons of more than one Lodge, and try to get a sense of the different cultures of the Lodges available to you. They are not all the same, and some may be a better fit than others for what you want. Be prepared to find the whole complex scope of human personality within our walls. Know that you will find real human beings struggling with real vices and shortcomings, just like anywhere else. You will encounter hypocrisy, egotism, and everything that our ritual teaches us to labor against, not only present among us, but in some places, malignantly so. Be ready to recognize all of that as a reminder of your own humanity, and your own need to strive to learn and grow, to open yourself to the mysterious aid of the Divine, and to encourage and support others in doing the same.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Joseph William "Bill" Riggs**  
Years in Masonry: **40**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Duvall Lodge No. 6 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My father-in-law was a Mason.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Lacking commitment and vision from our leadership. Unfortunately, our membership is following this "leadership."**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**No response.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The opportunity to meet men from different background and views.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, if properly prepared by good mentors. Unfortunately, many newer members believe that just because they have been raised, that they are "good mentors." Most are not.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Certainly. It would lay the groundwork for the study and learning that is required. However, how could standards be maintained throughout the state, when we have such uneven results from our current requirements.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**NO! I have witnessed it in Indiana and heard about it from Ohio. None of my Indiana friends have stayed active, and most have left the Fraternity. I understand that Ohio has experienced the same.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**A great deal. However, in my opinion, this education has been spotty at best, and worthless in many cases.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. Freemasonry is, to me, about self-improvement and personal growth. The charitable aspects can be found to be an outgrowth of this self-improvement. But it shouldn't be the primary purpose of Freemasonry.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**That they should have good and valid reasons for joining. I believe that the Fraternity should require a sit-down with some detailed information and expectations prior to just handing out petitions like Halloween candy.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Steven T. Lancaster**  
Years in Masonry: **6**  
Lodge Name and Number: **St. Andrews Lodge No. 18  
(KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**I have a friend in Virginia who is very active in Freemasonry. He often told me I acted as a Mason, even though I didn't belong to a Lodge. This made me interested enough to ask questions and eventually fill out a petition. My only wish is that I would have had some exposure to Masonry that would have made me interested earlier in life.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**As with most discussions on this subject, I agree that Masonry is dying out. At 62 years of age, I am one of the younger members of my Lodge. Young people either aren't interested, or, like me, don't know what Masonry has to offer.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Following the principles of Masonry has made me think more about the way people should be treated, and to think about the needs of others before myself. I have always tried to live by the Golden Rule, but Masonic principles took this philosophy to a much higher level.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**For me, it is the guidelines for interaction with other people. If more people lived this way, the world would be a much better place. Historically, most of the founding fathers of this country were Masons and the governing documents were generally based on Masonic values. As you can tell by the current state of affairs, we have gotten away from that.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I think it would take years to learn what each Degree of Masonry teaches. Unfortunately, Lodges do not open on the Entered Apprentice of Fellow Craft Degrees unless there is Degree work, which I think greatly limits how much Masons in these Degrees can actually participate and learn. I think Lodges of Instruction in each Degree would be very beneficial to teach the meaning of what we so hastily memorize so we can proceed to the next Degree.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I think structured education would be greatly beneficial. Education prior to be initiated would certainly help a person considering Masonry to know if Masonry was right for him, and would eliminate some of the people who do not return after being initiated. I think Masonic education should continue through all of the Degrees and be a part of every Lodge meeting. As Master of St. Andrews for the upcoming year, it is my goal to have education at every meeting, with the hope that members will get something out of it making them want to come to meetings for something other than a social meal and a boring business meeting.**



7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I, personally, have done it both ways. It took me a year to go through the York Rite Degrees and a day to go through the Scottish Rite Degrees. I didn't see a lot of difference in what I was able to retain. I have been in York Rite for three years and have worked hard on ritual, but have not had any education on the meaning behind the ritual. I have only been in Scottish Rite for two months and am reading to try to figure some of it out. With all of this being said, I think the one-day classes are beneficial to Freemasonry and to the person receiving the Degrees if he is active in Masonry and pursues Masonic education. I do not think receiving the Degrees just to add them to their resume is beneficial to anything.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**After discovering what my friend from Virginia meant by being a Mason and living by Masonic principles, Masonic education is the reason I attend meetings and stay active in the Lodge. If you do not get any benefit other than a social meal (which I do enjoy the fellowship), and a boring business meeting, why attend?**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**When I joined Freemasonry, it was to become a better person and to give something back to my community. While I think Freemasonry in general is a charitable organization, especially the hearing, eye and disability programs that operate through the appendant bodies, we in Blue Lodge could do more than bicycles and scholarships that help only a small number of people; and some that receive these are not needy. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked could do a lot for our image and add new members.**



10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I always take the line from the EA ritual and ask a person who I think would be a good Mason, if he is interested in joining a group of guys that through Masonic education become better, wiser, and therefore happier people.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Kevin Miles**  
Years in Masonry: **5**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Duvall Lodge No. 6 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Taking a good man and making him better.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**The Fraternity must change in order to survive.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Surrounding myself with good people. The bar is then set high.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Rituals. History of the Fraternity and why it was created.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, but each person is different. We cannot judge a man just on giving a proficiency in 28-30 days. Keep in mind they are just memorizing, not fully understanding what they have been through. Only after watching more Degree work from the very best will you understand each Degree to a point of being able to explain it.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**It is such a tough sell in today's world. For a man my age, the answer is yes. For a man in his 20s, starting a family, the answer is no.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not! The answer then lies with you. What did that man get from a one-day festival of Degrees??**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**You have got to have the right teachers in your Lodges. Experience is the key. I am just now comfortable to discuss certain things in Lodge such as Degree work and the constitution.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Yes, but it could be sooo much more than this. The key, in my opinion, is how does (did) Masonry change or develop my character? Am I a better man than I was, per the mantra of Freemasonry?**

What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**You must commit. The steady decline of Masonry is because it has become a "good ole boys" organization. Our leadership from a state level has become sub-par, and that is being nice. A new member can see this, and will never move past the EA Degree and will eventually demit. The challenge is: Is this person truly going to be a good Mason? Or is it that we just need members?**



# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Roger Kehrt**  
Years in Masonry: **1 (EA)**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Lexington Lodge No. 1 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**A documentary on the History Channel and the realization that I need to be a part of a group of good men.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Turmoil, and a lack of respect for traditions.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Freemasonry has given my life structure, discipline, and brought me closer to my Christian Church. The symbolism creates a deeper knowledge of myself in the areas above.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Brotherly love. Meeting on the level. Creating a better respect for others and learning not to be offended by different views.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**No. A man who puts in that little time will never find value.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely. Knowing myself (thyself) takes time. It is a journey, and one that starts in the heart. I have to ask the question to those who think otherwise, are YOU not worth the time and effort?**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Those one-day programs are destroying themselves, and won't last. It is a desperate move and wrecks accordingly.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Why else join Freemasonry if we don't have access to Masonic education? However, I believe without the Lodge showing brotherly love, retention will still suffer. Being a leader, you need to be good at education, and support those who are new.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. It is something we do, not who we are.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I would say each man has to choose their path. If a man is serious about self-improvement, I would highly recommend Freemasonry.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **H. Lee Delaney**  
Years in Masonry: **24**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Robert M. Sirkle Lodge No. 954 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My grandfather was a three-time Past Master of Flat Gap Lodge No. 616 (KY), in the York Rite, and a Shriner at El Hasa Temple (KY). I knew that Masonry played a big part in his life and helped to make him the man that he was. I wanted to be a part of whatever it was that helped shape his life.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**I'm starting to see a resurgence of interest from younger guys, but we have much work to do. We have lost many of the "old guard" even from when I became active about twenty years ago.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Constantly striving to live up to the tenets taught in my Masonic career has helped me become a better man. This is, of course, a continuing endeavor.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Brotherhood, being part of historical organizations, fellowship with like-minded individuals, scholarships, and striving to learn/become a better man/person.**



5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Yes, if he applies himself and learns what is required.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I feel that any educational program would be beneficial. There is no downside to more knowledge, Masonic or otherwise.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Yes, given people's busy/hectic lives. This would at least get folks involved and help with membership. But, it should be stressed to folks who take advantage of these opportunities that coming back to see the full degrees, or "normal" sessions portrayed/taught, would be to their benefit and knowledge.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think all Masons are always searching for more information and learning. Such opportunities appeal to most and are worthwhile.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Sure. There can be no better organizational calling than to help others that can't help themselves.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**You will find no better organizations or fellowship of men in which to be involved that those that are under the Masonic umbrella. If you are interested in becoming a better man, fellowship with other like-minded individuals, and work together toward charitable institutional goals, you should seek Masonic endeavors.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Michel Brassard**  
Years in Masonry: **13**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Harmony Lodge No. 579  
(Ontario)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Members of family at large.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Well, it is still relevant, although it competes with many facets of modern life, such as technology and work. It's a fine organization. Many believe us to be the evil of the world; I am sure some individuals are not entirely clean. The internet fuels the controversy and is adept at spreading falsities. Those that still find us, and inquire despite all the BS, have had to exercise their discernment, and still found something that speaks to them. So Masonry is not as popular as in the past, but to those who care to improve themselves, we have a life-long path for them.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Brotherhood tops the list for me, as it has been the enrichment received at the hands of Masonry. Many, naturally have leadership qualities, but those that don't, but implicate themselves, surely will develop it. The mind is a muscle of sorts, if you don't use it, you lose it. Masonry is a good mind muscle exercise. Furthermore, if you look into the meanings of our symbology, you will discover deeper nuggets of wisdom of our existence.**



4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Fraternal brotherhood. I look at it like an insurance in life. Your Brethren are bound by oath to be there for you. Being part of an exclusive Brotherhood has appeals for me. Like minded people are simply more enjoyable to be around. There are people that talk about doing, and those who do it. I was fortunate to be skewed towards the latter and my Lodge gave me a chance to rise.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**First initiation – two months; second – two months; third. Yes, to memorize the work and prove it. However the deeper meanings of the Degrees, the understanding, is not fully developed, so younger Masons often fail to live by the principles received at the hands of the Degrees. One should be required to prepare a talk on their understandings after each, or even after the Third Degree. Their understanding would make them better ambassadors for the Craft.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely in alignment with my thinking. Although many will enjoy and benefit by it, there are “medal collectors” in Masonry and that would not appeal to them.**

**Maybe it should not be mandatory, but somehow such a program should harness the enthusiasm and curiosity of a new Mason. Masonry is designed to let you in, but slow you down. By the Third Degree a year later, it may have lost its shine. I say somehow implicate them in something Masonic in character, so that when they do have to leave the Lodge, they understand the why and appreciate it, rather than possibly resent it.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Not everyone learns the same way and at the same speed. I joined in my 40s, so video games and other distractions were less appealing for me (less competition for my attention). Young Masons should be more mature, and this at any age to join Masonry.**

**They should go through a trial of sorts, to apply. Example: Accidentally, Covid has weeded out the people who lack patience. Those that stick it out are going to be more appreciative of the opportunity when it is given to them.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Those who look for deeper meanings in anything about this life, will treasure it. "Medal collectors" are not interested in the education.**

**Somehow, presenting Masonic education should be a requirement for you to advance in Masonry. Show not only your understanding, but share of your Masonic spirit; this at no cost to you, but at great gain to you and your Brethren.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Well, that is not an easy one. We are benevolent, it is one of the qualities that we exhibit, however, I would venture to say, benevolence is often thought of as gift of coin, and not so much as benevolence of spirit, of friendship, to the world at large. My benevolence is personal, it is often a handshake, a telephone call, a smile and kind words, and also coin. Masonry, because of dwindling membership, is forced to accept candidates that have money and not much discernable benevolence in their character. So, as time goes on, we are morphing into a private club, than a benevolent organization. At least in the eyes of many in society.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Join Masonry:**

**If you care and enjoy people;**

**If you care about your self-development;**

**If you want to discover God/Grand Architect of the Universe in a less traditional religious way.**

**Have faith in an organization that is hundreds of years old, and its traditions and wisdom is born in millennia of existence in one form or another. Masonry is a life-long journey. It is not a certificate, even a Degree. It's an organization that has traditions, lessons of life, and finds values in man and his heart. Like the military makes boys into men, Masonry makes men into even better men. I would tell you, join Masonry today and your journey begins.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Jaco Thompson**  
Years in Masonry: **7**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Silex Lodge No. 75 (MO)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**While my grandfather was a member, my real primary drivers to pursue membership in the Craft were experiences with my college fraternity and an interest I'd had since very young regarding ancient mystery traditions and concepts of "ritual."**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**At a turning point. While there are those pushing a status quo, there are burgeoning areas pushing for an honest assessment and refining our efforts to move the Craft forward from those aspects and mindsets that while at one point helped, have hindered the Craft and may harm it down the road (or already have).**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It's encouraged me to reflect more deeply on my own actions, to strive to be a better man, and to connect and care for those around me with a deeper sense of passion and life.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The initiatic experience that draws both the candidate and the Brothers in, and the fellowship of our Fraternity.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Perhaps, but it seems unlikely that one can truly grasp the experience well enough to make sense of it and labor as they are instructed in each Degree. Ideas need to soak, reflecting and contemplation, discussing and allowing Brothers some level of participation is key. It's tough to fit that in and be well rounded in 28 days.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. Providing scaffolding for Brothers to build their ideas and contemplate their experiences while discussing them with Brothers provides unique opportunities for mentorship and active inquiry that will make the Degree experience more meaningful and provide a path for Brothers not to feel rushed and drinking from a firehose.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No, the accelerated pace diminishes the candidate's experience and removes him from the "hands-on" connection borne through normal initiation practices.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**It can have a great deal when properly implemented. Education builds the experience for the Brother, new and old. It creates discussions, interactions, mentoring relationships and add value to meetings, where many times the only other action is buying the next can of green beans and purchasing toilet paper.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. Masonry practices charity. It is not a charitable institution in itself. By our actions, we encourage those extensions of heart and hand, but it's not our purpose.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Freemasonry brings men of various faiths, creeds, and backgrounds together. Through lessons and symbols centuries old it helps us become the best versions of ourselves through rites of imitation which challenge you to think and work. Setting us on paths to be better husbands, sons, friends and individuals in the world.**



# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Randy Sanders**  
Years in Masonry: **7**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Wentzville Lodge No. 46  
(MO)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Previous knowledge of esoterics/symbology .**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Like an ostrich, head in the sand at the Grand Lodge level. Pushing for membership instead of slashing budgets.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Masonry gives me a continued focus toward self-improvement. I had it before Freemasonry, but after the Degrees it became more focused, more intent.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Esoteric and Contemplative studies. The ritual is only as good as the understanding and intent behind it.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Within the context of Freemasonry as we observe it today, yes. When you take into account the reasons behind the seven years between levels within the ancient mystery schools, no.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Meh... The problem with structure is it tries to be one size fits all. I learned more from reading [Chris] Hodapp's, Freemasonry for Dummies than I learned from a dozen different Masons in the first year of joining. I learned more from self-study than anything structured across several difference jurisdictions. Don't reinvent the wheel, when Masons aren't even reading Steinmetz, et. al.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Yes. They are not my favorite, but they serve a purpose. If a Grand Master can "make a person a Mason on sight," and many jurisdictions can do so, and we advance a Brother with minimal training, then why worry about the time span? Much more important is the follow-up and inclusiveness so the Brother feels welcome and doesn't demit.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Masonic education has an effect, but it would be difficult to quantify. Structured education, again, tries to shove all feet into the same size shoe. GL of Colorado once did a survey on "non-payment of dues" suspensions, and they found something like half said they didn't understand the Degrees. That's mentorship and a direct one-on-one experience, not just education.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. I wrote a recent article in Midnight Freemasons explaining why. Faith, Hope, Charity (Agape), is the means by which we make ourselves better. Charity is a natural outreach from being a better man, but charity for charity's sake is a mental trap in gaining endorphins. I support our Shriner Brothers 100%, but I see charity as something we extend naturally, not the primary function.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**The best decision in my life was to submit a petition to join a Masonic Lodge. Every Lodge is different, so come have several dinners at all the local Lodges to see which Lodge fits you best. You are welcome to come for 20 dinners or more, if that's what it takes for you to make the best decision. We are patient.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Scott Payne**  
Years in Masonry: **10**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Robinson-Plumb Lodge No. 266 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**The history and the esoterica.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Compressing. The zombie Lodges are closing, and Lodges are consolidating. This is a good thing. We were/are spread too thin.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Freemasonry has taught me how to be a better friend and husband.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Uncovering our lost history and fellowship. I work for our Fraternity to go back to the way it was prior to the Morgan Affair, while bringing modern diversity and technology with us.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**It's the proper amount of time to make a man wait. Because if made him wait when he was 100% prepared, he would never become a Master Mason. It can take a lifetime of study to fully understand even one of our Degrees.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Not prior to the E. A. Degree. I think that truly before a man is initiated, we should be better in leveling with them and almost talking them out of becoming a Mason. Example: There is a lot of memorization and dedication to being a Mason. The E. A. Degree is the hardest. You'll want to meet with your mentor at least once a week to practice.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No. It waters down everything.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**Masonic education has the ability to re-ignite a Brother's passion in Masonry. It's just a matter of finding the right subject.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**It is, but it shouldn't be. Charity outside of the Fraternity should be secondary to literally everything that we do. We should stop worrying about our public image, and start working on developing the Craft.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I would tell them that it's one of the best things I have ever done. Then I would list the criteria, and then the process. After explaining all of that and seeing if there is still interest, I would then tell them, "The only way you can petition a Lodge is to ask for one. I can't invite you." That usually prompts the ask.**



# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Orlando DosSantos**  
Years in Masonry: **12**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Gateway Lodge No. 109 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Knowledge, and seeking the uncommon, or not well-known.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Lacking in aspects of education and, in some cases, upstanding men.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**Life lessons and guides on how to conduct yourself throughout life and family.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Learning about the past, and how we can use that to plan our future.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I don't think so, especially in these times when we have so much else to contend with regarding vocations and family commitments.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Oh, yes it will. I see good results with the ad hoc education program my Lodge is hosting in an effort to make it more of standard practice for incoming Masons. This is the first time I have seen a 90% retention rate from E. A. to M. M. and beyond since the implementation of the program.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not at all. It is a great disservice to the neophyte, and does not provide any grounding or base from which to build a long-lasting interest in all that Freemasonry has to offer and could provide.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**100% positive influence, and even Brothers that not involved in education can pick-up and see a difference in the attitude of candidates/Brothers that have exposure to an education program or curriculum.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No, I do not see it as such, but to the uninformed it may look like a glorified community organization, with strange practices and/or rituals. I will admit that my views have changed dramatically from being a regular person as to a fully pledged Master Mason.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**Great choice, but be of mind that as in life, and any relationship, it does take hard work, lots of patience, understanding and a true commitment as this is a lifetime choice, if well-followed and observed.**

# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Michael A. Himes, PGM**  
Years in Masonry: **47**  
Lodge Name and Number: **North Bend Lodge No. 346  
(OH); Gateway Lodge No.  
109 (KY)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My father was an active member of E. T. Carson Lodge No. 598 in Cincinnati, and because they stressed family involvement I grew up there around Masons that I came to admire and wanted to emulate.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Many people view anything from a “numbers” perspective only, but I am encouraged that, even though our membership is diminishing, many of our younger members are extremely interested in the Masonic education that will ensure their continued participation.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has taught me the value of teamwork, the ability to mesh with people from dissimilar backgrounds and cultures, and leadership skills that I would not have acquired through my vocation.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**I enjoy the fellowship, because I feel that only through interaction with other people are we able to improve ourselves, by being exposed to different viewpoints and philosophies. I enjoy the ritual, not only for the great moral lessons, but also because of the opportunity that ritual**



**affords to be expressive in a way that is not normally used in everyday life.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**I think that this is a question without a specific answer, as everyone learns and absorbs knowledge at a different rate. Also the term, “being prepared” is open to interpretation. If, by that term, is meant that a man is completely and totally conversant with all that the ritual of the previous Degree expresses or implies, then he will never be ready to move on. However, if we mean that he understands the basic lessons of the previous Degree, then 28 days is adequate. Masonry is a lifetime learning experience – we don’t have to require of him a thesis on the previous Degree to receive the next, and doing so will perhaps be more than he wants to undertake.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**I know that it would, based on my experience in the jurisdiction of Ohio. As in any field, an informed Mason is the one who will be most beneficial to his Lodge and the Craft in general. A program set up by those who are knowledgeable in Masonry would certainly be of more benefit than one that is assembled piecemeal.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**I think that they are. Many good men are turned off by the memorization requirements in place in some jurisdictions – it has been found that, once these men are in the door and understand what we do, they are willing to take on ritual parts, officer stations, and become active and prominent members of a Lodge. Participation and retention rates are nearly identical for those who are brought into Masonry in the**

**traditional way, compared to those who join through an expedited process.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think that it is extremely important. For years, there was no formal Masonic education program, but our members were educated in Masonry through their participation in the Lodge and exposure to men who had earned their Masonic knowledge through experience and the guidance of their Masonic forefathers. Whether structured or not, education is vitally important to keep our membership active and invested in Freemasonry and in spreading the word about the Fraternity to those who are not members.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**I do not – I see Freemasonry as a fraternal organization that, as a part of practicing its tenets, seeks to help others through charitable endeavors, but that is not its primary purpose – it is, however, important that we continue to do so as part of our public perception.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**We are an organization that takes good men and helps them to improve themselves, while also doing our part to improve the world in which we live. If that sounds like a group of men that you would like to be a part of, then Freemasonry is for you.**



# **William O. Ware Lodge of Research**

## **Covington, Kentucky**

### **Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV**

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Name: **Erik Marks**  
Years in Masonry: **4**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Alpha Lodge (MA)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**Initially, it was my biologically younger brother's then six or seven years of service in the Gentle Craft. He and I had been having spiritual/philosophical conversations on ethics and right conduct for years prior to his raising; when he became Master of Alpha Lodge, and I had been visiting for a while, we decided it was my time to join when he was Master, even though I was not able to commit to regular attendance due to two jobs and commitment to my family. When I first joined and was entered, I found the work deeply enriching and exactly the spiritual/psychological work I had been hoping for in a spiritual tradition that seemingly honored all faiths and people. The last few years have been testing that idea, and I'm close to demitting.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Poor, with bright pockets. Please pardon my frank comments: you've asked, and I'll answer. I mean absolutely no disrespect to the readers of these words, nor the high ideals in which I had hoped to participate. On the one hand, I can see the point to admit almost any man, as we are all ostensibly on "a path" towards betterment. However, my sense is that there is a desperate move towards quantity over quality, numbers superseding value. I understand. We become attached to the way things have grown into being, and the idea that we need to let go of buildings and status as numbers of Masons wane is scary. Personally, I would jettison all most of the exterior for men who are deeply committed to the values of Freemasonry, which I don't see many of us practicing. I dropped off Facebook; partially because it is an echo**



**chamber and panders to the basest of human desires. But mostly seeing “Masons,” so identified, engaging in absurd and horrific public displays of cruelty and idiotic disparaging of other Masons based on political and conspiracy rhetoric. Masonry is only a microcosm of the whole, we are human and act just the same as everyday citizens ... I had hoped we would strive to hold ourselves to more, to be more, to love all humanity more than our animal provincialism would perform.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**The process of Freemasonry is sublime! The ideals allowed me to use it as a container for my self-exploration and self-examination. I recognize I can still use my Lodge to test my resolve to try to chip off the rough bits of my personality, to question my lack of charitable thought and action towards my Brethren and humanity as a whole. It had been my hope this was the reason that men joined Masonry. I have learned in the last four years it generally isn't the reason. Often, it seems, men join to gain something rather than serve. To have great meals, network, have some sherry and cigars and feel manly. If I cared for those, I don't need Masonry.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**Charity, love: striving to help those less fortunate than myself.**

**Self-restraint: to practice seeing our urges and flaws, subduing their expression, and working to be as “strong” as we can to manage ourselves when provoked (internally or externally) to be able to work towards the most harmonious outcome in any situation.**

**Faith: to live our faith and support others in doing the same, even if their faith is different from mine. I could go on, but I'm not sure it matters. Freemasonry could be so rich as an institution, if most of our members tried to live it daily.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**It depends on the man. Personally. I think it needs to be longer, more difficult, asking more of us on every level. Students who are not challenged in school become bored and drop out mentally and spiritually, and society suffers for it. Masonry is no different. If we seek to be a “society” of men who simply get more men to join and ask nothing of them, we’ve failed the high ideals, each other, and the society we might seek to uphold.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**It could be helpful. But it can’t be sterile. I would have to ask men to challenge themselves: intellectually, but mostly emotionally. Asking men to do challenging study, writing, etc. is useful only to a point. Getting us to challenge our mostly deeply held beliefs and automatic reactions, there lies the gold – to touch the north, the dark aspects of self we try to avoid; look into the reflection and stay present – then we are working on shaping the stone into something useful. Stay on the surface ... business as usual and its fallow, hollow, brittle stone that crumbles under the weight of life.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**Possibly, again it really depends on the man. I recently met a man who strives to better himself – every day – he reads across all aspects of the spectrum to challenge his beliefs. He attempts to know the minds of those with whom he most vehemently disagrees, and to love them for who they are. I cherish time with him because he challenges me; his way of being beckons me to be better than I was yesterday. I was thinking he would be a great candidate for a one-day class as to me, he**



**is more Mason than most. But, he doesn't need Masonry since he is doing more challenging work than most men around me. So, we need him more that he needs us. My answers to this kind of question will most often be, it depends. Because it does.**

8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**I think it is everything. However, if men find a comfy Lodge where they get together, have a "great meal," go afterward and have happy hour, watch the game and shoot the shit ... they'll stay. If retention is the game ... send more steaks. Please pardon me. I'm sorry. I think our questions are flawed. Retention is easy, but it depends on who you want to retain ... and for what reasons. So, for me, the initial question needs to be more complex. If we want to retain men who want Masonic education, more education will retain them.**

**If most members want good meals and to feel at ease, bring the steaks and the beers ... education was not why they came. Again, I don't disparage having lovely fraternal merriment, but it wasn't why I joined.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**Yes and no. Any organization can give to others. That doesn't make Masonry what it is to me. I take the charity work as both literal and metaphoric ... and it has to start at home as love. If I cannot train myself through Masonry to be charitable, to subdue my anger (read: passion) at my child when he does something problematic, then it doesn't matter how much money I raise and give ... I'm still rotten. Charity is in the spirit that drives all my intentions and actions. If I am uncharitable at home, yet "charitably" giving through Masonry, I live a lie.**



10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I wouldn't start with saying, I would start with asking and listening. I would really want to know what they think we do, who we are, and why they are here. I would never discourage them from joining, and I would also give them as real an understanding of what I think Freemasonry holds as its ideals, and how I see most men living those ideals. I am very, very fortunate to have been offered the chance to become a Mason, to express the Mason who was in my heart. I am equally grateful for a handful of Brothers who ask much of me, with whom I speak often as we try to make more of ourselves, each other, and our country better.**

# William O. Ware Lodge of Research

## Covington, Kentucky

### Masonic Perspectives Questions Vol. IV

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Name: **Samuel Kyburz**  
Years in Masonry: **5**  
Lodge Name and Number: **Whitewright Lodge No. 167  
(TX)**

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1. What influenced you to seek membership in Freemasonry?

**My philosophy professor in college is who recommended me to learn more. He was not a Brother, but said that they propose a unity concept that sounded like something I would be into. He was not wrong.**

2. How would you assess the current state of Freemasonry?

**Declining in membership, excelling in substance. I truly feel that we are in a new golden age, similar to what we were seeing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century before the post-war boom.**

3. In what ways has Freemasonry been useful to you in your quest for personal improvement?

**It has greatly improved my management and presentation skills.**

4. What aspects of Freemasonry appeal to you most? Why?

**The tools of self-examination and self-realization that it can provide. The teachings of universality and inclusion that inculcate and the ability to meet men of all walks of life, all over the world.**

5. Generally, the minimum time between the Entered Apprentice Degree and the Fellow Craft Degree, and then between the Fellow Craft Degree and the Master Mason Degree, is one lunar month, or 28 days. Do you think that a man can be adequately prepared to advance to the next Degree within the minimum period of time? Why, or why not?

**Absolutely not.**

**I feel that we need to re-examine this on a jurisdictional level. Many of the decisions we make are fear based – i.e. if we can't get them raised fast enough, we won't be able to get them "in the line" and won't be able to open Lodge next year. That Lodge should turn in its charter. The problem is that the voting members are stuck in their ways and think that by keeping these dysfunctional Lodges in operation, we are somehow saving Masonry.**

6. Do you think that a structured Masonic education program that begins prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree and continues after the conferral of the Master Mason Degree would be beneficial? Why, or why not?

**Yes. It would allow a Brother to be better prepared to appreciate the work and actually be able to use our teachings for self-improvement. Otherwise we are nothing more than a fraternal theater troupe.**

7. Do you think that one-day classes, or other programs by which men are rapidly advanced through the Degrees, are beneficial to Freemasonry? Why, or why not?

**No.**

**Quantity does not mean quality/**

**How can we guard the west gate if we are leaving it wide open? The safeguards that are in place are there to not only keep a potential bad seed petitioner from joining our ranks, but also keep an unworthy Brother from advancing to the sublime degree, should the Lodge see fit.**



8. What influence, if any, do you think that Masonic education has on the retention of members within Freemasonry?

**A large one. I feel that if the Brethren are exposed to the actual teaching early on, it will endear them to the Fraternity.**

9. Do you view Freemasonry as being a primarily charitable organization? Why, or why not?

**No. Charity is a byproduct of the teachings we inculcate.**

10. What would you say to men who are interested in becoming a Freemason?

**I would ask them about themselves and their motives.**