

WHO IS YOUR HIRAM?

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Recently, a few brothers from my Lodge wanted to attend a neighboring Lodge, and they asked if I would come along. Always happy to get out, I agreed to go. This Lodge, in particular, caused me to do a lot of thinking. In my 18 years of being a Mason, I had never visited this Lodge, though it has been nearby most of my life. This Lodge, you see, was in the town in which I grew up.

In middle and high school, I had lived and played in the community and surrounding area where this Lodge is located. So many memories of that town flooded back to me. When I kissed my first girl, that Lodge was right down the street. When I learned to drive, the Lodge was only a short distance away. As I played sports, members of that Lodge were in the stands. During all of life's ups and downs, ebbs and flows, this Lodge was just down the road.

Some of my fondest memories were formed near this Lodge. The town in which it lies has always been special to me, and will always be. I still have friends that live in that little town.

After deciding to go with my brothers to this Lodge, I started to remember that some of my earliest exposure to Freemasonry was also in that town. When we first moved into the county, the waterworks employee was a Mason. He also was my bus driver. He didn't talk about Masonry a lot, but he was always there to help. A tiny little ring with an odd insignia on it was the only outward indicator of his affiliation to our Fraternity. As I grew older, he and I would often find ourselves locked in battle. Once, he caught me using tobacco on the bus. After a short call to my parents, my nemesis was born! When I decided to ride a motor scooter down the sidewalk, who caught me? You guessed it. Again, my parents were notified. Finally, after getting in trouble one too many times because of this ever-vigilant neighbor, I confronted him. I was not a small kid, and I excelled in sports. When enraged, I could be quite intimidating. As I tore into him about always catching me and telling on me, I noticed it wasn't fear in his eyes, but disappointment. After I was done, he simply said, "Son you have all the potential in the world, I don't want to see you mess that up. The people you are trying to impress are not your friends, they will not be there to help when you fall. Just trying to save you some grief."

Sometimes, big and strong as we are, simple words can shatter our self-perceptions. In that moment I went from frothing with anger in the intent to fight someone, to realizing that this person was only showing love towards me. In an instant, I apologized, thanked him, and tried to get away. We still butted heads a bit from then on, but nothing serious, and

sometimes even in jest. He didn't talk about Masonry a lot, but he tried to live the example that Masonry expects of us. His example is one that I remember to this day.

When I was old enough, I took a job in a grocery store in that town. Again, memories were made and are still cherished. From hanging from the sign because my friend and coworker stole the ladder, to working nights and weekends one summer to rebuild the stock room, to cleaning up after a devastating flood. As I dressed to attend the Lodge another memory came clearly to mind.

In that store, I had worked in the frozen foods section with an older man who never knew a stranger. Every morning he would make a list of what we had and what we needed to order. Then we would talk all day. I watched as this man greeted every person who came by, and not in the false way that greeters at big-box stores welcome you. This man knew everyone, and would ask about them, their families, and every detail of their lives that he seemed to know. Always a smile, a handshake or a hug was offered to people. On days when we were slow, we would constantly talk. Many days, I also noticed that he would read a book as he worked. Many times, it was this odd-looking little blue book, which I later realized was a Kentucky Monitor. I saw that man read many Masonic books and religious books while we filled the coolers. You see, this man was a Mason, and as we worked together, he took an interest in me. He would talk some about Masonry, and answer questions that I asked. He was also friendly in how he would change the topic at times, too. That was his way of handling things he couldn't talk about. During our time together, I learned a lot. I still cherish those conversations.

While attending Lodge that evening, I shared the story of these two men. I also shared the conclusion of this story, as I now share it with you.

Both men, by being a living example of Freemasonry, sowed seeds in me. The seeds of Freemasonry were planted by two people I had met merely by chance. So, in many ways, my journey in Freemasonry began there, in that small town and county. By the actions of those two men, by their choice to live the example that we are all called upon to do, I was exposed to the beautiful art that is Masonry. It took me a long time to finally follow through, but years after I left that town, I finally felt the tug on my cable tow.

Brothers, these men lived the principles of our Fraternity. Neither was a Mason in name only, they were certainly Masons in nature as well. By practicing the morals and values of Freemasonry they impacted the future of a kid whom they had no obligation to help.

Unfortunately, neither ever found out that I became a Mason. Life, occupations, and the ever-faster march of time didn't allow for that. However, something tells me both would be happy knowing that their legacy lives on.

Brothers, I tell you this story, because just like those two men, you never know who you will affect. Like that chalk we talked about so early in our journey, we leave our marks on

everyone we meet. If you live according to the values of Freemasonry, you never know who may look into our Craft because of the example you left. These men lived their principles; they dared to share their Masonry with the world, and they boldly shared their morals and values with everyone they met. Their example was the stimulus that caused me to seek out the light of Masonry.

We all know the story of a certain Master Craftsman, and we are instructed to mirror his virtue. These men did. Everyone wanted to work for Hiram because of his reputation. The workers on the temple emulated him and followed in his steps. In this manner, these two brothers were my Hiram.

I ask you, who was (or is) your Hiram? Who acted in such a way that you wanted to join this Fraternity? Whose Hiram are you? Who sees you living daily by the tenets of Freemasonry? Do you carry yourself in such a way that others are curious about your convictions?

Brothers, as our fraternity faces challenges to its very existence, the answer to our problems has always been in front of us. Just like the Hiram of legend, and the two Hiram to whom I was introduced, for Freemasonry to experience a revival we must all emulate the Master Craftsmen, both from legend and the real ones in our lives.

LIVE

Live your life in such a way that others see your principles. Let the world see the morals Freemasonry has inculcated in you. BE THE HIRAM someone else looks up to. Live in a manner worthy of emulation. Someone is always watching. Be their exemplar!

DARE

Dare to live the life we are called to as Masons. Dare to let the world know that we are inherently different. Dare to share your light with the world. Dare to ask others to be the best version of themselves, as you try to do the same. Dare to have hope for humanity.

BE BOLD

We have been so quiet, and so demure, that we are occasionally labeled a secret society. People only know what they have heard about us. Unfortunately, most of that is made up. Share your story, share your light, share your world. Boldly tell the world that you are a man, that you are a Mason, and a worthy example. Boldly give of yourself.

As we go out into our jobs, our communities, let us all remember the Hiram in our lives, and try to serve that same purpose in the lives of others.