

Commandery Growth

by Sir Knight R. William Perkins

Remember the disharmony of the workers at the end of the Mark Masters Degree? In the following degree, the Chaplain suggests to the candidate that a solution will be found within the Sacred Volume. When a Mason is installed as Chaplain in a Blue Lodge, he is told that from the Great Light we "...learn our duty to God, to our neighbors, and to ourselves." Within these pages can also be found guidance for the growth of our order.

I. A Study For Growth

A. 1 Chronicles 12:32 the "Issachar Factor"

We see here that we should seek counsel and guidance from those who know the times, the people, and area. This can be found in talking with your members and learning about them or their "group," meaning age, interests, and the effects that current events have on your members and potential members.

B. Numbers 26:53-55 the "Choice Factor"

God works with the choices we make. If we sit back and wait for candidates to "beat our door down," we will watch that door get locked for good. We will reap what we have gone out and sown for growth, which of course also speaks of our charitable and community work.

C. Acts 2:41 & 47; 4:4; 5:14 and 6:7 the "Number Factor"

As with each soul that is added to Christ's Church, so each of us adds another soul (member) to our order.

D. Amos 9:7 the "Israel Factor"

Although they were God's people, the Israelites sinned and found themselves back in captivity. The rules of growth apply to everyone and every organization. "We're special" are words of death. To rest on one's laurels is to await the closing of the coffin's lid.

II. Study Of Growth

1 Corinthians 9:22

This tells us that we should study and practice different methods for growth, accepting that what did work may no longer work, while at the same time not changing our message. In 1 Cor. 15:58, the apostle Paul goes on to say that we must

"...stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully..." which is true of the Lord's work and for Commandery growth.

III. Five Choices For Growth

A. Culture Choice

So often we are quick to pass judgment on another. Are we not reminded in Luke 6:37 not to judge others? If God had made everyone alike, it would be a very boring life. He gave us adventure and variety, and it is in this that we find growth.

B. Leadership

If you want growth, you have to be proactive. It can't just be the one in charge, or the "old guy" that's been there for what seems forever. It is the responsibility of every member to set an example that others will want to follow. The officers must be open and involved; they have to always be approachable. They must listen to the ideas and suggestions of all the members of their Commandery. Prov. 24:6.

C. Involvement Choice

This is getting people involved or "worked-up" about projects. Make sure that you do your best to let every member know that they are welcome and needed at all functions, no matter how long it has been since their last activity. It means doing God's work and the rewards that await us. John 14:21.

D. Outreach Choice

This means visiting our sick and homebound fellow Knight. This must include being there to assist with a sick spouse, a child, or a grandchild with special needs or making sure they know you are there. The families will see this, and many may want to join. Did not Jesus go to the sick and afflicted? Included here would be tactics practice. How often do we cram for an inspection, trying to memorize lines and floor work, only to embarrass ourselves and our Commandery? Yes, we all have lives outside of Lodge, but we also have "down-time," time to learn and brush-up on our tactics and the ritual of our other Masonic bodies. Pick a part and KNOW IT, not just learn it. My drive to work is twenty minutes. It's amazing how much you can learn in that time, and by the end of one week, how well you have it memorized. No, I've never had someone pass me and look at me strange for talking to myself. When possible, get with another and practice. Make it a point to have practices. Remember that you are setting an example for a new Knight while at the same time reassuring the "old-timer" that his years of work were not in vain. What sort of an example are you setting? Develop relationships. I spoke in a previous article about commonalities; use them! Get together for other activities and include your families.

E. Identity Choice

Are we outward focused and warm or inward focused and cold? Do we project a feeling of hospitality or of snobbery? A part of the identity is the dynamics. There is the group, and helping one another thus, internally, builds strength and establishes order. Gal. 6:2 and Rom. 12:15. Show and say who we are, thus clearing away suspicions and doubts. Gal. 3:27 & 28. This is, of course, our mission as Christians. Heb. 12:28; 13:15 and 1 Pet. 2:5.

The Great Light in Freemasonry is the rule and guide of our faith and so of our lives. Refer to it, follow the example mentioned at the beginning of this article, and by so doing, let it shine before man that others will want to join us and that we might grow and our world once again become good.

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