

PATIENCE

In today's world, one catch phrase is "I want it all and I want in now!" Our children (and many of us), live in what I call the "microwave society" or that state of state of mind where I want it, I get it and I get it immediately.

I blame that attitude primarily on the microwave. The microwave teaches us that we can have our food in just seconds and food manufacturers make food specifically for us to microwave and have in just seconds. As I look through the pantry, I have not found one packaged food that does not have "microwave instructions." Sometimes, it causes us to burn our mouths because we do not wait for the food to cool. Other industries have jumped on the bandwagon and here are just a few examples.

You need or perhaps want a new car and go to the dealership (in some cases you can call ahead for an instant loan approval) and in minutes you find out that you are approved for a loan for that sporty automobile or nifty SUV. You go to your personal computer and search online and locate the car of your dreams in just seconds. Then you just "pick it up."

You take a few pictures with your digital camera, take them home to your computer and immediately print the pictures. Or maybe you stored them on your memory card, so you stop by one of the photo processors and instantly you see your pictures print right before your eyes. No waiting! And just to make it easier, you can take your picture and your digital camera will display it on a small screen so that you can either delete and retake it or save it.

And now, most of the major credit cards like VISA, have an option where you just have to pass your card over a card reader (you do not have to use the swipe feature or even sign a receipt) to be approved for your purchase.

There are just a very few areas of our life in which you really have to wait or "be patient." Not very often do we have the opportunity to "learn" patience. In fact, a lot of folks will not wait at a restaurant to be seated and many generate ulcers just waiting for the Doctor to see them (a couple of the last places that we might have to be patient). I have even heard of a businessman who billed his doctor for making him "wait" beyond his appointment time (of course, the doctor bills you for not showing up for an appointment no matter what the excuse).

The dictionary defines patience as:

Not losing one's temper while waiting; not bothered with having to wait; not unwilling to wait.

Between 234 and 149 B.C., Cato the Elder said, "Patience is the greatest of all virtues." And all Masons have learned to live by and even embrace virtues.

But one of the last places we can learn patience is in Masonry. Among the lessons of the third degree, we learn that “time, patience and perserverence” accomplish all things. We also learn that between degrees we must not only learn our catechism or work, but we have to wait a minimum time period between degrees.

Officers learn that in “rushing” through the opening and closing rituals much of the wording is lost or mumbled. Even a new candidate quickly learns that unless the officers take their time in rituals, the words become mispronounced or incorrectly enunciated so that the candidate misses the true meaning of the degree. This also makes learning the catechism much more difficult because the candidate did not have time to concentrate on the original explanation, ritual or lecture as it was spoken to them. As they start in the school of instruction, it is like hearing things for the first time.

Even in a time when new officers are hard to come by, it takes time for an officer to learn the work and lectures so that he can move up in the officer line. This IS a good thing, because not only does the officer learn it, but he has a chance to live it and experience it. I believe patience will make him a better Mason and a much better officer.

I will leave you with this quote from the Author, Brian Adams.

Learn the art of patience. Apply discipline to your thoughts when they become anxious over the outcome of a goal. Impatience breeds anxiety, fear, discouragement and failure. Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success.

So mote it be!

Herb Atkinson,
Worshipful Master