



**The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and
Accepted Masons of Virginia**



Committee on Masonic Education

DEO Presentation Program Paper

**Reliving Your Initiatory Experience
of the Entered Apprentice Degree**

**By Right Worshipful Paul W. Pennybacker, Sr.
Committee on Masonic Education**

There are times as we listen to the opening and closing ritual or watch the degrees when something we have heard again and again suddenly stands out and takes on new meaning. And, thus, it is that each of us has the opportunity to learn something new every time we attend Lodge or participate in a degree.

Each of the degrees is meaningful, but as we think back to when we took the degrees, we may find that one particular degree had special significance for us. In some cases, it may be the Entered Apprentice Degree because that was our initiation into Freemasonry. Everything about the Fraternity was new, and we were embarking upon something quite different from what we had previously experienced.

When I think back to my initiation, I am reminded of some of the valuable lessons in that degree. We start out in a small room, in darkness, both physically and spiritually. There is some trepidation, but we soon

learn that we are not really alone in this momentous adventure of our life. We have a friend who will assist us in our journey.

We are reminded that we are to put our faith and trust in the Supreme Architect of the Universe, and that we must, to the best of our abilities, dedicate our lives to maintaining that faith and trust.

Initiation is a type of rebirth, and as we make our journey with our friend, we eventually come to a point where, like a newborn child who comes from the darkness of the womb to the light of the day, we behold the great and wondrous things presented to us, and begin to understand the lessons they teach.

We learn about the history of our Craft – that we were at one time Operative Masons, and although we have since evolved to speculative Masonry, we still use the tools of Operative Masonry to teach valuable moral lessons about how to best use the hours of the day, and how we are to keep our minds and consciences fit for service to our Creator and fellow man.

For me, one of the highlights of the Entered Apprentice Degree was the presentation of the Lamb Skin or White Leather Apron. We are subsequently informed of its moral significance and learn that we will not wear it again until we are called by the Supreme Architect of the Universe to make that journey from our earthly abode to that Celestial Lodge above. So Freemasonry focused my mind, not only on today, but on the future, not only on the need for industry and hard work, but on the necessity for moral and spiritual growth.

We learned that it was our duty to help our fellow man, more especially a fellow Mason, as much as we can without causing distress to ourselves and family. We are to be self reliant, but not selfish.

As we absorb the teachings of the Lecture, we become aware of the significance of the number “three.”

- We learn the interconnected nature of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, for we need Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings.
- We learn about the furniture of a Lodge and another triad: the Holy Bible, the Square, and the Compasses – with the Holy Bible dedicated to God, the Square to the Worshipful Master, and the Compasses to the Craft.
- We learn about the ornaments of a Lodge, which are the Mosaic Pavement, Indented Tessel, and Blazing Star.
- We learn about the Immovable Jewels of a Lodge, which are, the Square, Level, and Plumb – and are worn by the three stationed officers of the Lodge.
- We learn about the movable jewels of a Lodge, which are the Rough Ashlar, the Perfect Ashlar, and the Trestle Board.
- We learn about the tenets of Freemasonry, which are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Brotherly Love means that we are to treat all human beings as equals; Relief means that we should do all we can to soothe the unhappy, sympathize with the misfortunate, and seek to

restore their peace of mind; and Truth means that we are to avoid hypocrisy, deceit, and unprincipled conduct, and to rejoice in the success and happiness of others.

Most of all we learn that the lessons of the Entered Apprentice Degree Ritual are not just words; they are the principles that should guide our lives and govern our actions.

Thus, I would close as I began, by suggesting that each time we attend an Entered Apprentice Degree, we have the opportunity to relive the experience of initiation. We need to listen actively to the words being spoken and think about how we might be able to really live Freemasonry by applying its values and lessons in our daily lives.

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