

I would like to talk this morning about being trustworthy and reverent. It's kind of interesting to me that there seems to be a connection between the first and last point of the Scout law. First and last things always seem to be special. First is always thought of as important, but sometimes something that is last can be very important, too. For instance, many times we speak of 'saving the best for last.' God even calls himself the Alpha and the Omega, which means he considers himself the first and the last: the total being.

So perhaps Scouting can be summed up in these two points. But I think that we must understand the full meaning of these words. First of all, when we think of being trustworthy, we immediately think of not telling a lie. There is much more to it than this. To be trustworthy is to be trusted with something. In other words, what it really means is responsibility. And reverent really means to show respect. We can apply this, not only to God, but to other people and other things. So let's rename, just for this morning, the first and last points of the Scout law: Responsibility and Respect.

To start with, let's look at trust, or responsibility. I would like to illustrate this in the following way: Let's suppose that you were on a trip with your troop in the desert. It was decided that you should be responsible for taking care of the water supply. To be trustworthy in this job you would try to make sure that none was wasted, spilled, or contaminated. Everyone would be depending on you because this water was their lifeline. Should you be careless with it, you would be endangering the health of the group.

A situation that happened to me at work is worth repeating here. I had borrowed a very valuable piece of equipment from a fellow worker, who entrusted it to me. Another man I worked with took it upon himself to misuse it, and came to tell me he thought that he had ruined it. It really bothered me because, even though the failure of the item really was not my fault, I was responsible for it. I was going to have to go to the man who had trusted me and say: "I have violated your trust; I am responsible for the destruction of this device. Will you trust me again with another?"

Each of us has been entrusted with certain physical and spiritual quantities. The earth, for instance has just been lent to us for a time. We are to be stewards of its goods; we must take good care of it. One of the first commands God gave to man was to care for the garden of the earth. Recently our attention has been drawn to our limited resources, and how we must be responsible in our actions to keep spaceship earth operating.

Let me read a scripture which I find very interesting in this regard. In Ez 34.18-19, we read, 'Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?' How appropriate this is in our Scouting experience! Can we use facilities such as Arrowhead here, and leave them so that others can enjoy them? Or do we just trample the grass, muddy the waters, and spread trash all over? A Scout is Trustworthy: that means that he accepts Responsibility for what he borrows and uses; and that means he does not get careless with his Trust.

We must apply these principles spiritually, as well. The truth has been given to us for a time to use, and this is what I really think that God was talking about in Ez 34. How are we using the truth? Do we litter it with our own ideas so that we have totally camouflaged its beauty? Do we belittle it at school or work so that no one else can enjoy it either?

This is where being reverent, or being respectful, comes in. We must respect the Word of God, the Bible. I remember being taught to not throw the book around carelessly. This is not exactly what I am talking about. God is much more concerned with the way throw around carelessly the important ideas which he has given us in the Bible.

Many times we may be uncertain about God and his word, but at school or work we make fun of it to others. What right do we have to 'muddy the water' for anyone else? Do we dare change markings on a wilderness trail to lead them astray? We must Respect their right to have their own opinion and an open mind about it all.

We have been entrusted with many things in this life; material things, such as the earth we live on; and spiritual things, such as the truth. We must respect them as we live. If you don't ever

remember the twelve points of the Scout law, please remember the first and last ones in their most complete meanings. Be the kind of person who can be trusted with valuable things. Be the kind of person who respects himself, others, and that item with which he is entrusted.

God is looking for those with these kinds of good attitudes. Just as the reward for keeping this campground properly is the ability to enjoy it as you have this weekend, the reward for respecting and protecting the truths of God is the ability to enjoy it. Only this enjoyment is eternal. I hesitate with anyone to stress the particular characteristics of heaven or hell. Let me instead simply say that on one hand you are established with God in a perfect Father / Child relationship and in his truth; on the other hand you are totally apart from God and any thing that even resembles what you might call goodness. The choice is yours - the rewards are yours.

A Scout is Trustworthy ---- A Scout is reverent!

Live that kind of Scouting!

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