

**Elder Robert L. Backman**  
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Much of what I've learned in Scouting, I have learned in the mountains. I've hiked up to the top of the mountains at Kings Peak. I've climbed down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. I've gone through the middle of mountains as I went down the Salmon River. I've explored new mountains, hiked the wrong mountain, and I've learned to know the mountains in my own back yard.

Those journeys in the mountains were hard. I know that our Scoutmaster did not mean for them to be easy. He wanted us to stretch and hurt and struggle and learn the lessons of life. Through it all we learned the importance of having the right attitude.

Our Scoutmaster has been Scoutmaster about ten years. And during those years, not a single Scout of Troop 112 has escaped having to learn "scriptures." There was the famous scripture our Scoutmaster called "David O. McKay 2:4" — "Tell me what you think about when you don't have to think and I will tell you what you are and largely what you will become."

And our Scoutmaster had a few sayings of his own. (Some of them are almost legends by now because he has said them on every Scout trip every day for a decade.) I remember when we were camped at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. We were supposed to get up early, get organized, and be on our way. But we lazed around and were soon struggling slowly upward in the hot sun.

Then came that great saying: "He who can beat the battle of the bed can win the war of the world." In other words, if we were to succeed, we must have self-discipline — that meant getting out of bed early in the morning. It meant being in control of ourselves. When we made poor choices, we had to face the consequences. We become too hot, too tired, and too thirsty. Many canteens ran out of water before the Scouts got out of the canyon . . . and the temperature at the bottom was 113 degrees.

Another hike I'll never forget was our climb to Kings Peak. We learned the truth of the saying: "When you see a man on the top of a mountain, remember, he didn't fall there." After days and miles and heavy packs, just putting one foot in front of the other was hard. That's when I'd hear those famous words that my Scoutmaster had been saying for years: "You'll get your second wind." "It's just around the corner." "It's only about 200 yards." "Make your mind tell your body what to do. Don't let your body tell your mind what to do."

Just when we'd gone around another corner and then another and another; just when we'd gone 200 more yards 200 times; just when we'd thought we were going to drop dead

— our Scoutmaster's voice would ring down the mountain: "Boy, this is really livin." He'd say it over and over. Then we'd say it and after awhile it was true — It was really livin!

There were other things I learned on those trips; scriptures that took on meaning. "Be not weary in well doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work and out of small things proceedeth that which is great." "One step at a time can finally bring a person to the end of a long journey." And as he is going along, he should be able to help others: "When you help a friend to the top of a mountain, you will find that you have arrived there also."

On those trips our Scoutmaster talked of things other than merit badges. He talked about Paul as we were hiking, Nephi when we were sitting around the fire, Abraham when we were looking at the stars, and Jesus of Nazareth just before we said our prayers and went to sleep. And at one time or another, he sent us each out alone to pray as Joseph Smith had prayed.

I listened very closely to our Scoutmaster and tried to do what he said — because my three older brothers are Eagle Scouts, and I wanted to be like them. My Scoutmaster is my father, and I want to be like him.

If I can remember what I learned on those hikes up and over and down and into the mountains, I believe I can make it through the journey of life. The journey will not always be easy. My Scoutmaster knows that. But perhaps some day in high school or college, or on a mission, or at some later time if ever I am discouraged, if ever I begin to doubt myself or wonder if I can go on, if ever I think I can't take another step — those words will come back . . . .

"Come on now, you'll get your second wind . . . It's just around the next corner . . . Only 200 yards more . . . Make your mind tell your body what to do . . . Be not weary in well doing. . . When you help a friend to the top of a mountain . . . Tell me what you think about when you don't have to think . . . Boy, this is really livin."

And one more great scripture: "Dispute not because ye see not, for there will be no witness given until after a TRIAL of your faith."

The trials will come, but you and I do not need to be afraid. We are prepared. We are Eagle Scouts. Our Scout Law and our Scout Promise tell us to follow a higher road, to have the right attitude, to serve, to share, and to succeed. We can have the courage to say what President Spencer W. Kimball said: "There are great challenges ahead of us, giant opportunities to be met. I welcome that exciting prospect and feel to say to the Lord, humbly, GIVE ME THIS MOUNTAIN" (*Ensign*, Nov 1979, 78).