



Principle and Honor

Providing Resources to Support Units, Chapters, and Lodges

The ancient Greek Socrates had an incredible mind and spent his life seeking truth. He was a great teacher of honor and principle and was a genius in the area of rational logic. Socrates once created a functioning government in his mind by using conversation with other people and applying logic with it. These conversations were recorded by one of his student Plato. The story is called “The Republic” and it is considered one of the masterpieces of human literature. Thomas Jefferson and others used much of it when forming the government of the United States.

Socrates, because he would never lie, made enemies in his home of Athens, Greece. He was brought to trial on trumped up charges, found guilty, and sentenced to die by drinking a poison made from hemlock. Socrates could have left the country and lived, but reasoned that he knew the laws of Athens and still chose to live there and therefore was honor bound to obey those laws and any judgments that came from them. In the end he drank the hemlock at the hour that he was supposed to, and he died.

Socrates lived a life of honor, principle, and truth that few men have equaled. Each of you needs to have a set of principles about right and wrong and a code of honor that helps you live those principles. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law are good places to start. As you lay in your tent at your next outing, think about what principles you should use to guide your life and the decisions you make. Then stick to them as you live your remaining days.