

# Out of Small Things Proceedeth That Which is Great

## President Kim B. Clark

The following is a portion of the original devotional address (same title) given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on January 10, 2006 in which President Clark introduces the Honor Code Map.

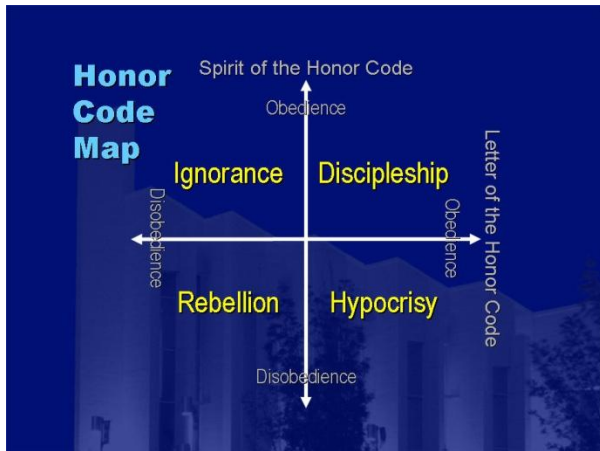
The Honor Code includes many things that we might describe as great: honesty and integrity, avoiding pornography, living the law of chastity, and the Word of Wisdom, indeed, the gospel of Jesus Christ. But it also contains many rules against things that we might describe as small: flip-flops; curfew; torn or ragged jeans; long sideburns; shorts and capris; form-fitting tops and pants and other immodest styles; beards; “underwear styles” of clothing; and much else. Some of you may wonder why we have such small things in the Honor Code.

It is true that flip-flops and an unshaven face are not big things. But it is just like the stories of pride and greed in the Book of Mormon: failure to do the small things can, in a short period of time, lead to failure on the big things. The principle is so very clear: obedience to the small things creates a spirit of obedience in all things, and thus protects against evil and invites the blessings of heaven. Following the rules about the small things establishes a great spirit of obedience on the campus. It creates a context of respect for learning and for the university that encourages a spirit of order and reverence. In that context of obedience and reverence and order, the Holy Ghost can minister on this campus. These blessings come to you individually and to us as a community.

This is why we have such seemingly small things in the Honor Code. This is why such a small thing like wearing flip-flops on campus or going to class with a little beard or breaking curfew is so deadly. This is why if you are on campus and discover that you have on flip-flops, or realize you have not shaved, the images of the great destruction in the Book of Mormon should come to mind. You should immediately think to yourself: my small act of disobedience is opening a crack in the great protective power of the Honor Code. I am personally in great danger; and if everyone behaved like me, the community would be in peril. And then you should immediately turn around, go back to your apartment, repenting as you go, and change your shoes, or shave, and come back living both the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code.

This is also why if you ever hear sarcastic words coming out of your mouth like: “So, what are you, the Honor Code Nazi?” or “Why are you so dressed up?” or any other words of scorn and ridicule directed at your classmates who are living the Honor Code, you should immediately recall the words of Mormon, repent on the spot, apologize to them, and ask their forgiveness. Because of its importance and its power in this community and in your life, I invite you to take a personal inventory of your relationship to the Honor Code. In order to help you do this, I have prepared what I call the Honor Code Map. The first dimension of the map is obedience to the letter of the Honor Code, represented by the horizontal line. In the middle of the line, I have marked the boundary between obedience on the right and disobedience on the left. The second dimension of the map is the spirit of the Honor Code, represented by the vertical line. Above the horizontal line are those who live the spirit of the Honor Code; below the line are those who do not. These two dimensions establish the four quadrants of the Honor Code Map. As I explain

each one, I want you to reflect on your own situation. I want you to ask yourself: Where am I in the map, and where am I going?



Let's begin in the upper left-hand quadrant. Students in this part of the map live the spirit, but not the letter of the Honor Code. How is that possible? I believe this occurs when students desire to do what is right, but do not know about or do not understand the standards. I will call this quadrant the Zone of Ignorance. If you think you might be in this zone, I encourage you to get educated. Go and read the Honor Code carefully. There are many people who will help you. The Zone of Ignorance is not a good place to be.

Moving counterclockwise, we come to the lower left-hand quadrant. Here are students who live neither the letter, nor the spirit of the Honor Code. This is the Zone of Rebellion. Students in this zone know the standards, and yet choose to willfully rebel against them. If you are in this zone, I invite you to do one of two things. Number 1: repent and get out of the zone; in other words, change your ways. You will find many around you willing to help you and support you, including your bishop and the Lord. If you are in the Zone of Rebellion and do not want to change, I invite you to do Number 2: attend another university. If you are in rebellion against the Honor Code and if you persist in that rebellion, this is not the university for you. You have no right to be here, and there are many worthy students who would like to take your place. It is not good to be in the Zone of Rebellion.

The lower right-hand quadrant is next. In this zone, students are in compliance with the letter of the Honor Code, but they do not live its spirit. Their hearts are not in it. I call this the Zone of Hypocrisy. Students in this zone often live near the edge of compliance. They don't want to be in violation, but they often get as close as they can without going over the line. While it is better to be in compliance than not, it is not good to be in the Zone of Hypocrisy. Such students have ". . . a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof" (JS-H 1:19). And with that denial, students lose the protection and blessings they might have had. The Zone of Hypocrisy is not a good place to be.



The last quadrant is the one we all should strive to be in. I call this quadrant the Zone of Discipleship. I am happy to say that the vast majority of students are in this quadrant.

Students in the Zone of Discipleship are in compliance with the letter of the Honor Code, and they live its spirit as well. Some, in the lower part of the zone, are at an early stage of their discipleship and are working to live its

principles more fully. As they do so, they travel the Path of Discipleship. The same is true of those who take my invitation to get out of the Zones of Ignorance, or Rebellion, or Hypocrisy. All students who seek to increase in obedience to the letter and to the spirit of the Honor Code travel the Path of Discipleship. They see the connection between the small things and the things that are great. They understand the importance of obedience, and they see the Honor Code as a preparation for the higher laws and covenants the Lord desires to give them.

### **Giving Our Hearts and Minds to the Lord**

It is my deep hope that all of you will move forward on the Path of Discipleship. Living the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code requires vigilance and diligence and obedience. One of the biggest challenges is exactly what the Lord warned us about in the 64<sup>th</sup> section of the Doctrine and Covenants: we grow “. . . *weary in well-doing . . .*” (verse 33). There are always temptations to let the Honor Code slide, even if only a little bit. It may be tempting to break curfew just a little bit; to have your girlfriend or boyfriend in your bedroom so you can talk privately for just a little while; to copy that one small paragraph from the Internet and present it as your own; to let your beard grow on the weekends; to wear that stylish but low-cut sweater on Saturday night. It may seem easier to dress down, to not shave, to slip on the flip-flops like an old habit, to wear that old ragged pair of jeans that are so comfortable.

The solution to this problem is also exactly what the Lord said it was: to give our hearts to Him. So, what exactly does this mean, to give our hearts to the Lord? We give our hearts to the Lord through the covenants we make with Him. Paul teaches us that the promises we make to our Heavenly Father are not just words written on paper, or even on plates of gold, or on tablets of stone. If those promises are to be the foundation of our discipleship, they must be written in our hearts. To the Corinthian disciples, Paul said, “. . . *ye are . . . the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart*” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

Speaking of the new and everlasting covenant of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts . . .*” (Hebrews 8:10).

I want you to look very carefully at the words in that verse. When we give our hearts to the Lord, He writes the covenants and the promises in our heart. Through the power of the Spirit, those promises become our deepest commitments and the motivating force in our lives.

This process of giving your heart to the Lord is the great key to understanding the purpose of the Honor Code and its place in your life. The Honor Code is a preparatory commitment to live the gospel and conduct your lives in a spirit of obedience. It not only protects against evil and invites the blessings of heaven here and now, but it will help you to prepare to live the higher law. In that spirit of preparation, you not only need to live the letter, but also the spirit of the Honor Code. You need to be in the Zone and on the Path of Discipleship. For that to happen, the Honor Code needs to get into your heart. Don't let it be just a set of rules written on paper or on the Web that you have to live to be in good standing in this university. I pray that you may give your heart to the Lord and see and feel the Honor Code as a blessing, as a source of strength and

protection and a preparatory gateway to the marvelous blessings of the new and everlasting covenant that the Lord desires to give you.

In these higher covenants we promise all that we have or might have to the Lord and His work. We promise all that we are or might become to our eternal companion. There is no room there for a partial or halfhearted commitment. There is no place in these eternal covenants for living at the edge of obedience. The Lord will have all of you, all of your heart, all of your might, all of your mind, and all of your will. But His promise to you is likewise all encompassing: if you are true and faithful to those covenants, you will be endowed with power from on high; you will be joint heirs with Christ; you will receive all that the Father has. Can you understand it? Can you begin to comprehend it?

My brothers and sisters, these promises are yours. Through your faithful obedience you really are laying the foundation of a great work. Small things really do matter. Out of small things proceedeth that which is great. May God our Father bless you to see and know of the power of small things. And may you give your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that if you do, you will be of good cheer as He leads you along in love and peace on the Path of Discipleship. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.