

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

August 17, 2014

Volume 34, # 34

Thoughts About the Difference Between Character & Reputation

Reputation isn't everything. Character is much more important. A reputation that is gained without character is hypocrisy. A reputation that grows out of a good character is simply giving honor to whom honor is due.

Character is within your power. Reputation is a thing over which you have little control.

Character cannot be taken away from you by any man. Reputation can be stolen from you by liars.

Striving for character is strength. Aiming solely at reputation is weakness. Character endures difficulty.

Reputation seekers are confused when difficulty arises. Character seeks to do what is right.

Reputation seekers seek to do what is acceptable to the most mortals.

Integrity, honesty, clarity, and honor are valued by men and women of character. Vagueness, indistinct communication, and craftiness are hallmarks of reputation-seekers.

The man with character can stand alone when duty calls upon him to do so. The reputation seeker will not stand alone under any circumstances.

The man with character tries to clearly and honestly speak the truth and openly invites others to examine it. The reputation seeker aims at acceptance and therefore makes vague statements that can be interpreted in ways acceptable to the hearer.

The man of character speaks the truth as clearly and kindly as he is able at all times and under all circumstances. The reputation seeker speaks the truth with boldness only when he is assured that those who are significant to him will applaud.

The man of character is often out in front, regardless of who is following. The reputation seeker cannot lead the way because he cannot move in any direction until he is assured that the army is already headed that way.

The reputation seeker is confused by the man of character. He tends to assume that all men are motivated as he is and he attempts to manipulate others by dangling before them the golden carrot of approval and by goading them on with the spear of disapproval. His arguments are often shallow and when he cannot convince others with reasonable discussion he attempts to intimidate with threats of harming the reputation of the man of character. He is shocked, perturbed, and disgusted when his petty attempts at coercion are ignored by the one who is examining his own heart and his own Bible rather than opinion polls.

The godly man of character has a genuine light that shines for all the world to see. When right-thinking men see it they glorify God (Matthew 5:16). The reputation seeker has no real light, but he works very hard at giving the impression that he does. His artificial light changes color as it radiates in different directions. It is adjusted so that men who see it will glorify him.

Sometimes men of character deservedly own a fine reputation among men. This is desirable above great physical wealth (Proverbs 22:1). But a fine reputation is not to be desired above character. False teachers have always enjoyed fine reputations among some segment of the people (Luke 6:26). They, along with other hypocrites of their stripe, have traded character for reputation and have received the only reward they will ever see (Matthew 6:1-21). Only a man of character can "rejoice and be exceedingly glad" when he is wrongly persecuted and when men say all

kinds of evil against him falsely because of his practice of Christianity (Matthew 5:10-12). The reputation seeker will fall apart at such times.

Only the man of character can truly teach and practice the truth without partiality (1 Timothy 5:21, James 3:17). He is not moved by the potential influence of his hearers upon the opinions of others. He does not challenge the sins of those without influence while ignoring those of opinion leaders. All are treated equally by him. The reputation seeker "pets the big dogs" and kicks the helpless ones if doing so will please the "big dogs."

Reputation seekers tend to, sometimes subtly, point at their degrees and awards hanging on the walls and suggest that you ought to respect their opinions because they have been respected by influential men in high places. Men of character point at the Bible and suggest that God's word is alone worthy of your trust and that all opinions ought to be weighed upon God's scales.

Men of character are able to say, "I was mistaken" when they are able to discover errors in themselves. They clearly defend what they have said or done when they are accused of errors that they, themselves, cannot detect. Reputation seekers, on the other hand, are quick to say that they have been "taken out of context" even when their words clearly mean what they appear to mean when placed in their context. Their "clarifications" are often very imprecise and unclear. Since many approved of them for what they did say they cannot retreat from it. Since some disapprove of what they said they cannot directly own it. Their fence-straddling seldom wins for them the approval of both sides and it often backfires and causes them to earn the displeasure of both. Honesty and consistency go out the window when reputation is the goal. They are obvious and apparent when character is the objective.

Work to become a man or woman of character. Begin on the inside. The outside will follow. Those who love truth and right, though they be few, will love you. God will love and reward you. When you look in the mirror you will be able to approve of what you see. The transient applause of men cannot match the authentic approval of heaven or that of your own conscience.

- Tim Nichols

"Unto The End..."

How do you feel about someone who starts a sentence and never...? How about someone who starts a job but never gets around to completing it? Do you feel that you owe a man pay when he does not finish a job for which he has been contracted? Do you expect to win the prize, if you do not cross the finish line? For some reason we understand that truth as it applies to our physical world but seem to think that it will not apply in eternity.

We do not receive the crown of life until the end (cf. 2 Timothy 4:6-8) — "...I have finished the course..." Paul said, "henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." The crown does not adorn the head of the weak, indifferent, worldly minded, negligent, quitters. It is always our prayer, as it was the Hebrew writer's, that "...we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:11-12).

Starting is the easy part — it is the finishing, the grinding it out when it hurts, the bearing up under exasperation, the enduring when it seems there is no end in sight - that is the hard part. Sometimes folks start walking the narrow way but it becomes too difficult and the price is too great to pay. Like the shallow soil, there is no depth and they quickly fall away (Matthew 13:5, 21). If we do not faithfully endure to the end, there is no crown of life.

- Jim R. Everett

How Gullible Are We?

A freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair, April 26. In his project he urged people to sign a petition demanding strict control or total elimination of the chemical "dihydrogen monoxide." And for plenty of good reasons, since:

1. It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.
2. It is a major component in acid rain.

3. It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state.
4. Accidental inhalation can kill you.
5. It contributes to erosion.
6. It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.
7. It has been found in tumors of terminal patients.

He asked fifty people if they supported a ban of the chemical. Forty-three said, "Yes," six were undecided, and the last one? Well, only one knew that the chemical, dihydrogen monoxide is water (H₂O).

The title of his prize-winning project: "How Gullible Are We?"

There are many in the religious world who are just as gullible. Millions always believe, without ever investigation whatever their preacher espouses from the pulpit. Many would not know the difference between truth and error (no matter how obvious). Friends, that is why we need to be like those noble Bereans, where of them it is said, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Being gullible is what leads to religious error that will condemn one's soul. Think about it!

- Tom Moore

> "O Devil, why do you hit us when we are down? Old boy, I know that you have no time for me, and I guess that you have about learned that I have no time for you. I will never apologize for anything I have ever done against you. If I have ever said anything that has does not hurt you, tell me about it, and I'll take it out of my sermon." — Billy Sunday

> If you don't know where you are going, you will not like the place you finally reach.

*Elders: Gregg Needham,
Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley*

Evangelist: Gary Smalley

Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30

Sunday PM: 5:00

Wednesday PM: 7:00



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)