Chapter 2 – Building a Good Reputation

- Once, when the author was putting a sermon together about “the family”, he asked his 8-year old daughter how he measured up as a dad.
- He noticed she was fighting tears, and asked her directly if something in his life troubled her.
- She said, softly and sensitively, just one thing – sometimes when I talk to you, you don't listen.
- Gene tried hard to change that facet of his character.
- It is so easy to take those closest to us for granted.
- We think they'll understand, and they often do.
- But it still hurts them, and it is still a weakness in our personalities that also hurts our reputations.

An Overarching Quality

- 1 Tim 3:2 – the mature man should be “above reproach”.
- Fortunately he was not referring to perfection.
- He was simply stating that we should have a good reputation.
- This quality is mentioned first, both here and in Titus 1:6-7.
- The reason is that it is a summary quality, the result of living out the other qualities mentioned in these two lists.

Find us Seven Good Men

- Acts 6:3.
- When the apostles were looking for people to help with some of the physical aspects of ministry, they asked the church to recommend seven men of good reputation.
- If they had not been of good reputation, they would not be respected or trusted, people would second-guess them or criticize them, and they would be unable to lead.

Well Spoken Of

- When Paul visited Timothy's hometown on his second missionary journey he probably met him personally.
- But Timothy's reputation had preceded him.
- Acts 16:2 – he was well-spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium.
- In other words, Timothy was above reproach, even as a fairly new Christian.
- 1. People spoke positively about this young man.
- 2. More than one person spoke about Timothy.
- 3. People spoke about Timothy in both Lystra and Iconium, in more than one location – he had a good reputation both at home and away from home.
- In other words, people of good reputation create positive comment among a variety of people in various locations.

What Are Others Saying About You?

- It takes time to build a good reputation.
- It should happen naturally as we grow and mature in our Christian life.
- On the other hand, a person who has a poor reputation is displaying traits that are not in harmony with Christian principles.
- Ask yourself:
  - “Do I get positive feedback from those closest to me (my wife, my children, my friends) that would indicate I have a good reputation?”
- Feedback from those who do not know you well, is not necessarily a good test.
- Their evaluation may be superficial.
- Your public personality may not reflect who you really are as a person.
- It is easy to fake spirituality.
• I could easily give an impression of having it all together
• This is not to make us critical or skeptical, but to help us take a look at ourselves
• To know what I am really like you would have to ask my wife, my kids, people I have worked with for many years
• To make this study really personal, ask people like your husband or wife or others who have been around you and really know you, what you are really like
• This may seem scary and threatening
• But it will be well worth it in terms of results
• Some other questions you may ask:
  ◦ Do people seek me out to share their lives with me? Do they trust me with confidential information?
  ◦ Do my relationships with people grow deeper the longer they know me, and the closer they get to know me
  ◦ Does my circle of friends grow continually wider?
  ◦ Do people recommend me for significant tasks without fear of my letting them down?

Still Water or a Bubbly Brook
• Be careful in judging a person by their outward appearance
• Still water runs deep, while a bubbly brook can be shallow
• The way people are in public is often very different from when they are in private
• The person who seems to have it all together in public may be quite different at home
• The quiet and reserved person may have enduring qualities of maturity
• The person who is more real – even if more quiet – may be the type of people you truly want as close friends

Taking the Plunge
• You may find it hard to be objective about these kinds of questions, and it may be difficult to get started
• It is like standing on the edge of a cliff ready to dive into water you have never explored before
• But others have taken this step and have found it rewarding, it changes your life and how people feel about you

Discussion Questions
• What is the first step we can take to determine what people really think about us?
• Are there areas of our lives where we believe people have false views about us have misjudged our attitudes and actions? Why did this happen? What can we do to correct this misperception without appearing defensive?
• Are we aware of any attitudes and actions in our lives right now that are hurting our reputations? What steps can we take right now to rebuild our reputations in this area?
• What one thing would you like to do immediately to begin to enhance your reputation as a Christian?

Set a Goal
• Write out one goal you would like to achieve as a result of this study

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