

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Volume: 746 February 20, 2020

Your Name

Bill Brinkworth

One of the most important things you will ever own is not your house, your intelligence, your good looks, nor your wealth. Your most valuable asset is your name.

When your name is uttered, what connotation does it bring to the hearers' ears? Do they first contemplate, "Oh? He has lied in the past, so chances are what he says may not be the truth." When you are mentioned, do they giggle and remember all the foolish things you have done, and because of your past, refuse to take anything you do seriously? Does the label "adulterer" flash through their minds when you were mentioned because of sinful behavior in the past? Are you branded as a cheat forever because of being caught in class many years ago? When "hard worker" is mentioned, is your name the first one they think of? Are you always remembered positively because of your concern and care for others?

What we do or say usually burns an impression in someone's mind of who they think we are, and what they think of us and our character. It is an impression that is difficult to change or erase from one's memory. The value others put on our name often dictate how we will be treated by them. It may affect job placement, how we are treated in school, or even who will agree to marry us. Others' opinions and thoughts when our name is mentioned have a lot to do with whom we are and who we will be.

Most of the references in the Bible using "name" have to do with God's name. All through the Bible His name has earned others' respect. His name stands for justice, truthfulness, faithfulness, one who can do the "impossible," and the one to go to in time of need. "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" *Psalms 8:9* Also: *Psalms 8:1*, *Psalms 29:2*, *Psalms 102:15*, *Isaiah 9:6*

The Bible does have something to say about the values our name can have. Here is some of what the Bible says our name can mean to others:

- The Bible says the reputation your name brings is of great value.
"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." *Proverbs 22:1*
- Do good, and the right thing and your name will have a positive meaning to many. Do wrong and your name will be forgotten, or it will not be a pleasant memory to those that know you. If your name has a negative connotation, it is usually no one's fault but your own.
"The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." *Proverbs 10:7*

- An ointment may be fragrant and smell good to many, but it will not affect as many as will one with a good reputation. The loss of such a wondrous person with a commendable name will be a great tragedy to those that were touched by their lives. *“A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth.” Ecclesiastes 7:1*
- God will not honor the reputation of those that did not honor him. *“Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.” Psalms 9:5*
- Those that love God will have a good reputation for doing so. *“But if any man love God, the same is known of him.” I Corinthians 8:3*

Our lives impact many. What impact did we leave in their minds when we interacted with them? What do others think when they remember us?

To keep a good reputation: “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” — I Thessalonians 5:22

Bad Reputations

Bill Brinkworth

Unfortunately, people do not usually forget the wrong things we do. That is why it is best to avoid doing them in the first place, as it will be etched in others’ minds permanently. Most of the good we have done can be wiped far from memories and replaced by the remembrance of the bad things we have done. Here are some historical figures that are still remembered for their wicked deeds.

- Attila, the Hun: This emperor who lived after 400 A. D. is still remembered for his cruelty.
- Billy, the Kid: His real name was Henry McCarty, but he was also known as Billy the Kid and William Bonney. He is still remembered for killing over 20 people.
- Joseph Stalin: Remembered for the terror he inflicted on the Russian people and for the removal of private ownership of the property of his people.
- Adolph Hitler: This German politician will never be forgotten for his ordering the murders of millions of people, including many Jews.
- Al Capone: This American gangster is still remembered for his leadership of a crime syndicate, and the crimes he committed in the 1920s and '30s.
- Lee Harvey Oswald: Although he was killed before he was tried in court, he is remembered as the murderer of President John F. Kennedy.
- Jack Kevorkian: He is also known as “Dr. Death” because of his assisting over 100 people in killing themselves.
- Bill Clinton: This former president’s reputation is still overshadowed by his dishonesty to the American people and his act of adultery.

(Your name here)

Is remembered for:

A Rose

Barbara Brinkworth

According to William Shakespeare, “a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” While that may be true, the name of something brings to mind immediately many characteristics of the thing mentioned. This is also valid when the name of a person is mentioned.

Many people in the Bible have certain characteristics or images forever associated with their names. Some of these are positive and some negative. Here are a few of them:

- Jezebel — *wickedness*
- Ruth — *faithfulness*
- Judas — *betrayal*
- David — *giant-slayer*
- Moses — *great leader*
- Elisha — *great follower*
- Barnabas — *comforter*
- Daniel — *courageous*
- Sarah — *submissive*
- Cain — *murderer*
- Samson — *great strength*

When your own name is mentioned in conversation, what characteristics or images come into the minds of the people in that group? Susie, the encourager; Michael, the late one; Ethel, the giving one; Jerome, the negative one?

What your name represents to others is very important. If you are not content with what your name means to others, today would be a good day to start making some changes.

“The way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.”

— Socrates

Character

Author Unknown

Have you ever watched the icicle as it formed? Have you noticed how it froze, one drop at a time until it was a foot long or more?

If the water was clean, the icicle remained clear and sparkled brightly in the sun. If the water was slightly muddy, the icicle looked foul, and its beauty was spoiled. Just so our characters are formed. One little thought or feeling at a time adds its influence. If each thought is pure and right, one’s character will be lovely and will sparkle with happiness, but if impure and wrong, there will be deformity and wretchedness.

“Too many Christians soil their name when they impersonate an unsaved person.”

Power of Character

Dr. Haven

Benjamin Franklin attributed his success to his being a public, honest man. He did relate it to his talents or his power of speaking. Those abilities were but moderate, but to his known integrity of character, he said, "... I had much weight with my fellow-citizens. I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in my language, and yet, I generally carried my point."

Character creates confidence in men in high stations as well as in human life. It was said of the Emperor Alexander of Russia, that his character was equivalent to a constitution.

That character is power is true in a much higher sense than knowledge is power. Mind without heart, intelligence without conduct, and cleverness without goodness are powers only for mischief. We may be instructed or amused by them, but it is sometimes difficult to admire them as it would be to respect the dexterity of a pickpocket or the horsemanship of a highwayman.

Truthfulness, integrity, and goodness are qualities that form the essence of good character. When Stephen of Colonna fell into the hands of his assailants, and they asked him, in derision, "Where is your fortress?"

"Here!" was his bold reply, placing his hand upon his heart. The character of the upright man shines forth with the highest luster when all else fails. He takes a stand upon his integrity and courage.

"If we take care of our character, our reputation will take care of itself." – D. L. Moody

The Most Important Thing

D. L. Moody

John Bacon, once a famous sculptor, left an inscription to be placed on his tomb in Westminster Abbey:

"What I was as an artist seemed of some importance to me while I lived, but what I was as a believer in Jesus Christ is the only thing of importance to me now."

"There is no defense against gossip's exaggerations and misconceptions. They usually do not spread the truth, but only their opinions."