A Good Name

Intro: Solomon speaks of the importance of a good name; Pro. 22:1 “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” He sees such great importance he states it again; Ecc. 7:1 “A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth.” Almost all recognize it to be a highly desirable asset. A person obtains a good name by doing right.

Story of General Robert E. Lee (he committed himself to the south during the civil war, sought to retain his good name).

After the American Civil War, the managers of the infamous Louisiana Lottery approached Robert E. Lee and asked if he would let them use his name in their scheme. They promised that if he did, he would become rich.

Astounded, Lee straightened up, buttoned his gray coat, and shouted, “Gentlemen, I lost my home in the war. I lost my fortune in the war. I lost everything except my name. My name is not for sale, and if you fellows don’t get out of here, I’ll break this crutch over your heads!”

I. Those With a Good Name
   A. Jesus the Christ has the greatest name.
      1. Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”
      2. Pilate; Luke 23:4 “Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.”
      3. Phi. 2:9-11 “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

   B. Some others:
      1. The elect lady; 2 John 1 “The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;”
      2. Gaius; 3 John 1-3 “The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 2Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.”
      3. All those great men and women of faith mentioned in Heb. 11.
         a. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses’ parents, Moses, Israelites, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets.
         b. Heb. 11:2, 39 “For by it the elders obtained a good report…. 39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:”

   C. Cornelius
      1. By the soldiers; Acts 10:22 “And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report [well reported—ASV; good reputation—NKJV] among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.”
      2. By God; Acts 10:2 “A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”
3. Even though he had a good name, he still had to hear God’s Word and obey it to be saved.
   a. Acts 11:13-14 “And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.”
   b. Eph. 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
4. The words Cornelius heard included the command to be baptized; Acts 10:48 “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

II. ESSENTIAL TO BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE
   A. Essential for elders
      1. 1 Tim. 3:7 “Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”
      2. Tit. 1:6-8 “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;”
   B. Needed for Gospel preachers
      1. 1 Tim. 4:12 “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”
      2. 1 Tim. 4:15-16 “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 16Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
   C. All Christians
      1. Mat. 5:13-16 “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 15Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 16Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 17Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
      2. 2 Cor. 3:2 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:”

III. HOW DOES ONE OBTAIN A GOOD NAME?
   A. Keeping our commitments.
      1. The old adage: A man’s word is his bond.
         a. Formerly a handshake was all that was needed to seal an agreement.
         b. Today that is not the case.
         c. Christians should be known for their honesty.
      2. Mat. 5:37 “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”
      3. Jam. 5:12 “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”
4. How committed are we to keeping our commitments?
   a. Do we put the kingdom first; Mat. 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
   b. Do we love God first and foremost in our life; Mat. 23:36-37 “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 3) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”
   c. Do we read and study God’s Word; 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
   d. The Sanhedrin took notice that the apostles had been with Jesus.
      (1) Acts 4:13 “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”
      (2) Can others see that we have been and continue to be with Jesus?
         (a) Col. 1:27 “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:”
         (b) Phi. 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

B. Being compassionate to others.
   1. Jesus showed compassion to others. It is seen in:
      a. Healing the sick; Mark 1:40-41 “And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.”
      b. Comforting the bereaved;
         (1) Luke 7:12-15 “Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.”
         (2) To the point of tears; John 11:35 “Jesus wept.”
      c. Teaching the truth; Mark 6:34 “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”
   2. We, as Christians, are to be compassionate.
      a. 1 Pet. 3:8 “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:”
      b. Rom. 12:15 “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.”
      c. Gal. 6:2, 10 “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ… 10As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”
      d. It would be feeling with and helping others with their needs, whether emotional, physical, spiritual, etc.

C. By our behavior.
   1. Our lives are to be lived as it becomes the Gospel.
      a. Phi. 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”
b. Eph. 4:1 “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,”

c. Col. 1:10 “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

d. 1 The. 2:12 “That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”

e. Tit. 2:10 “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

2. What we say should demonstrate Christianity.

a. Eph. 4:25, 29 “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another…. 29Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

b. Col. 4:6 “Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

c. Mat. 12:36-37 “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

3. What we wear should show our Christianity.

a. 1 Tim. 2:9-10 “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”

b. 1 Pet. 3:2-4 “While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

4. Our behavior will be as it should if we have the proper mindset.

a. Rom. 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

b. Phi. 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

D. By avoiding questionable situations.

1. If you put on a white suit (dress) and then go down into the coalmines, the suit (dress) will get dirty.

2. If we go to the wrong places, it will stain our purity.

Conclusions: We should so live that if/when someone makes a false accusation against us, no one will believe it; 1 Pet. 3:16 “Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.” When we have a good name, they will be ashamed when we are falsely accused.