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1 Kings 10

*“Reputation”*

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It took King Solomon 20 years to build both the Temple and his palace, and he was now about 40 years old. He was in the prime of his life, and he was wealthier, more popular, and wiser than any king on earth, according to [1 Kings 10:23-24](#).<sup>1</sup>

The Queen of Sheba was one of many who came to see Solomon. She lived in a distant country approximately 1,500 miles south of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> [1 Kings 10:10](#) tells us that when she came to see him, she *“gave the king 120 talents of gold,<sup>3</sup> large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.”*

Jesus mentioned her in [Matthew 12:42](#),<sup>4</sup> when he referred to her as the *“Queen of the South,”* and he commended her for seeking Solomon’s wisdom, while at the same time condemning his own generation for not seeking his wisdom. In other words, Jesus was saying that she travelled approximately 1,500 miles to seek Solomon’s wisdom, and that now that one greater than Solomon (Jesus) was there, they wouldn’t even walk across the street to seek his wisdom. Therefore, Jesus said, the Queen of Sheba would testify against them at the judgment.

In this study, we’ll look at the importance of understanding that our reputation is both heard and observed, as well as the fact that our reputation is our witness for the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> [1 Kings 10:23-24](#) – *“King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings on earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.”*

<sup>2</sup> Sheba is mentioned 22 times in the Old Testament, and it’s associated with southern Saudi Arabia, or possibly Yemen. This region was well known for its gold, precious stones, and spices.

<sup>3</sup> One hundred and twenty talents would be equal to 4.5 tons, which means her gift would have been worth about \$170 million dollars today!

<sup>4</sup> *“The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.”*

## Solomon's Reputation

1. **1 Kings 10:1** - *"When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions."*
2. She didn't come to "stump the band," so to speak; she came to test Solomon in the sense that she wanted to prove to herself that what she had heard about him was true.
3. **1 Kings 10:6-7** - *"She said to the king, 'The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard.' "*
4. Solomon's reputation of being wise, successful, and having a relationship with the Lord is what caused her to go to all of the effort and expense to see him.
  - a. The definition of reputation is the common opinion that people have about someone or something, or the overall quality or character as seen or judged by people in general.

## We All Have A Reputation

5. We don't have to be famous like King Solomon to have a reputation, because being alive is all that's needed to allow people to form an opinion about us.
  - a. Our reputation may be good or it may be bad
  - b. Our reputation may be true or it may be untrue.
  - c. Our reputation may be limited or it may be widespread.
  - d. No matter what the case may be, we all have a reputation.
6. What God thinks about us is what matters most, however, having a good reputation with others is important.
7. **2 Corinthians 3:2-3** - *"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."*

8. A good reputation can be about whom we are (character) or what we do (talent, i.e. he's very artistic or she's a great cook).
9. The reputation of talent is not as lasting or as important as the reputation of character.

### A Good Reputation Is Important To God

10. God places such a high value on having a good reputation that he made it one of the qualifications for church leadership.
  - a. **1 Timothy 3:7** - *"He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."*
11. **Revelation 3:1** - *"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead."*
  - a. Jesus was saying of the church in Sardis, "People think that you are spiritually vibrant, but I know who you really are, and the fact is, you are spiritually dead."
12. Sometimes we try to project a reputation that isn't real, and while it may be true that we are able to fool others some or all of the time, we will never be able to fool God, because he knows whether our reputation is real or a façade.
13. **Proverbs 22:1a** - *"A good name is more desirable than great riches."*

### A Reputation Is Both Heard And Observed

14. **First Kings 10:4-5** - *"When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the Lord, she was overwhelmed."*
15. Reputation is not all about what people hear, because sometimes what people hear isn't true or accurate (hearsay).
16. We need to remember that we shouldn't always believe what we hear about others or be bothered about what hear about ourselves, because a true reputation is observable.

17. **Luke 7:33-35** - *“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.” But wisdom is proved right by all her children.”*
- a. *“[W]isdom is proved right by all her children,”* means observing the fruit of a person's life as being the real evidence for their reputation.

### Your Reputation Is Your Witness

18. According to **1 Kings 10:1**, part of Solomon's reputation that drew the queen to Solomon was *“his relation to the name of the Lord.”*
19. The most important part of our reputation is how we represent Christ to others.
20. Everything the queen saw in Solomon's life caused her to see the Lord and to give glory to the Lord!
- a. **1 Kings 10:9** - *“Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness.”*
21. **2 Corinthians 4:7** - *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”*
22. **Matthew 5:16** - *“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”*

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **1 Kings 10:1-13** to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share experiences they've had regarding meeting someone for the first time and recognizing who they thought the person was by what someone has told them about that person.
4. How would you describe your reputation in your home, your neighborhood/community, your workplace, and the church?

5. Do you care about what others hear about you or observe in your conduct?
6. If you were indicted as being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?
7. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 3:2-3](#).
  - a. If, like Paul says, you are a living letter, and letters always carry a message, what kind of message are you sending to others?
8. Are you known as being generous, loyal, honest, trustworthy, hardworking, loving, or fun to be with?
9. Are you known for having a bad reputation as one of the following: being loud or obnoxious, a liar, angry, lazy, manipulative, self-centered, or flirtatious?
10. Read and discuss Will Rogers' quote: "It takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but you can lose it in a minute."
11. Use Pastor Gary's illustration about restaurants and their reputations for having good/bad service, expensive/affordable food, clean/dirty facilities, or pleasant/rude wait-staff, as the springboard to talking about your Christian witness.
12. Read and discuss [Matthew 5:16](#).
  - a. What would others say about the wattage of your "Christian light bulb"?
  - b. Do people praise the Lord because of your witness?
13. How has the Lord helped you reshape, refresh or renew your reputation?
14. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: consider and evaluate their reputation with others; ask the Holy Spirit's help in reshaping or restoring their reputation.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).