

CREW Bible Study

Message Series NOW & LATER – Week 2

About this series: We're all making decisions now that can affect our later—our future—whether we like it or not and whether we realize it or not. And while many students may get this intuitively, there's often a competing idea that what they do now doesn't really matter in the long run. That's why, in this series, you'll be leading students to the secret behind good decision-making: wisdom. Through the wisdom found in Proverbs, you'll help students learn what it looks like to apply wisdom to their everyday decisions NOW, which can lead them to a better life and a better future LATER.

- **BOTTOM LINE:** A good reputation is good for you now and good for you later.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand how making good decisions about their reputation can lead them to a better life now and the opportunities they want later.
- **SCRIPTURE:** *A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Proverbs 22:1*

MESSAGE

Are there any Taylor Swift fans out there? If you're a fan – great! And if you aren't – stay with me here for a minute!

Back in 2017, Taylor released her 6th studio album called "Reputation". The album came out after a lot of media hype over supposed feuds with other celebrities like Kanye West, Katy Perry, Calvin Harris, and Kim Kardashian. Songs on the album pointed to this with titles like "Look What You Made Me Do". Rumors and a lot of gossip had given Taylor an even bigger reputation, and it was bad. Other than her "Swifties", it seemed that people in general were believing the hype. What once was good was not so good anymore.

Sometimes people become even more popular because of a bad reputation. Can you think of someone like that? Who at your school fits that description? Sometimes people who party a lot and break the rules get glorified for it. To a lot of people, it makes them even cooler.

And on the other hand, people with good reputations can seem way less cool.

Here's another scenario – You may have the best intentions of doing things the right way, but maybe you made a mistake in the past that you're not proud of. You did something you regret. But now it's like people identify your reputation with that ONE event.

And what about lies people spread? You can't completely control what other people think of you and say about you. Has anyone ever started a rumor about you, and now it's part of your reputation?

Your reputation. Whether you think about it all the time, or it hasn't really crossed your mind much, we're talking about it today.

Even though the Bible is ancient, it has some great advice about things that are really relevant to us today. The Book of Proverbs is full of amazing pieces of truth and insight that can make us all better at life. We said last week that it was written by King Solomon, who was known for being incredible wise. Let's call Proverbs a "wisdom book."

Listen to these words from Proverbs chapter 22, verse 1

A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

Is your reputation that big of a deal? Is it a bigger deal than getting rich? What do you think?

Here's what I've seen to be true about reputation: Your reputation doesn't really matter to you so much until you wish you had a better one.

A bad reputation can be like a locked gate. When you make bad decisions and don't care about what other people think, the gate closes. And when you continue to make bad decisions and you continue to not care about what that looks like, the gate locks. And sometime in the future, you might want to walk through that gate, but the gate will stop you and prevent you from going through. Why?

Because sometimes opportunities open and close simply because of what you're known for, simply because of your reputation. It's true.

But you know what's also true? There *are* things you can do to help you have and keep a positive reputation. Here's two things:

FIRST, you can control what you want to be known for. If you could be known for two or three things, what would they be? You don't need to know the answer right now, but take some time to think about it. And while you're thinking, take what your family and your wise friends think into consideration. And lean on the wisdom of what you feel God has in mind for you too. He created you and wants you to become the best version of yourself. What does that look like? When you figure it out, let the things you think, say and do always be a reflection of these two or three things.

SECOND, you can control your long-term perspective. Maybe you're thinking, "What do I do now if I'm already known for some bad stuff?" Remember this: It's never too late. A good reputation is about more than just middle school or high school life. It's about the kind of person you are from the inside, out. It's about who you choose to be. Don't just think about now. Think long-term. Think about later, too, and what you need to do to get there.

A good name is more desirable than great riches.

Having a good reputation isn't a promise that you'll always get what you want, but it *will* set you up for more good opportunities in life. These words of wisdom from the Book of Proverbs are meant to encourage you to lead a better life, both now and in the future.

Control what you're known for. Start today.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Should you care about what people think and say about you? Why or why not?
2. How is caring about what people think different than caring about your relationships with people?
3. Read Proverbs 22:1. Is a good reputation that big of a deal? Is it a bigger deal than getting rich? What do you think?
4. How does a bad reputation possibly hold someone back? Have you ever seen someone with a bad reputation move ahead and be praised?
5. How does your social media feed contribute to your reputation? What are some steps you can take to ensure a positive reputation through social media?
6. What are the advantages of a good reputation?
7. What are some ways you can repair a bad reputation?
8. By the time you graduate, what are two or three things you personally want to be known for?
9. What can you start doing now to have that reputation?
10. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest), how do you think 1. Your parents would rate you; 2. Your school friends would rate you; 3. Your church friends would rate you:
 - a. Trustworthy
 - b. Kind
 - c. Loyal
 - d. Honest
 - e. Patient
 - f. Real
 - g. Faithful
 - h. Truthful
 - i. Cheerful
 - j. Generous