

Keeping Your Behavior In Line
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Jeremiah 22:13-21

When I interview people for jobs I almost always ask tell about your best boss and why they were...and, conversely tell me about your WORST BOSS and why they were.

Ever have a bad boss?

What are some of the characteristics of a bad boss? (Discussion)

You've no doubt heard the saying: **Some people LOVE things and USE people...instead we should LOVE people and USE things.**

Here's a thought:

You can tell how a leader feels about God by the way he/she treats their people.

Christian leaders in government, at work, at church, and as head of the household, are to lead with both RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE and to treat people with COMPASSION AND RESPECT.

Is that from scripture or did I just make it up?

Proverbs 14:31 (New International Version) tells us...

31 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Luke 12:48 (NIV)

48 But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

**You can tell how a leader feels about God by the way he/she treats people.
But this is not just a lesson for leaders**

Not only are Christian LEADERS being watched...EACH of us who professes to be a Christian is being watched as to how we treat people.

We can re-write our statement: You can tell how a PERSON feels about God by the way he/she treats people.

Jeremiah 22 is the account of a line of kings of the land of Judah. It's a line that included a king who was a Godly ruler and his sons and grandson who were not.

- The good and Godly king was named Josiah
- Of him, 2 Kings 23:25 said:

- "Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses."
- King Josiah was a good and Godly leader...his son Jehoiakim...was the POLAR OPPOSITE. In this passage, it was Jeremiah's MISSION to CALL HIM OUT on his disobedience.
- Let's begin reading in verse 13 of Chapter 22

Jeremiah 22:13-21

New International Version (NIV)

13 "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness,
his upper rooms by injustice,
making his own people work for nothing,
not paying them for their labor.

14 He says, 'I will build myself a great palace
with spacious upper rooms.'

So he makes large windows in it,
panels it with cedar
and decorates it in red.

- Clearly Jehoiakim liked NICE STUFF!
- How did Jeremiah say Jehoiakim was building his great, luxurious palace?
- What does that say about how he felt about PEOPLE versus THINGS?
- Jeremiah continues to rebuke this evil king:

15 "Does it make you a king
to have more and more cedar?"

- Remember the old bumper stickers and t-shirts in the 1980s which read, "He who dies with the most....(toys wins!)"?
- How did Jehoiakim measure his self worth and importance as King? stuff
- He measured his importance by USING PEOPLE to get more STUFF!
- Is it wrong to have some nice stuff?
- Can you "live well" and still be a Godly leader or a Godly person?
- Look at the rest of verse 15...Jeremiah asks:

Did not your father have food and drink?

He did what was right and just,
so all went well with him.

16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy,
and so all went well.

- Jehoiakim, your dad lived in a pretty nice palace...he drove a nice chariot...he wore some nice clothes...his fridge was well stocked...he even had a place at Judah Beach!
- But look at verses 15 and 16: What does Jeremiah say Josiah the good king did differently than his evil son?

- "He did what was right and just" and verse 16: "He defended the cause of the poor and needy"
- In both cases what did Jeremiah say the results were? "All went well."
- Your father did what was right in God's eyes and God was pleased
- It's like Jeremiah was saying these dreaded words no son wants to hear:
- "Jehoiakim you're not HALF the man your daddy was!"
- Look at the rest of verse 16:

Is that not what it means to know me?"
declares the LORD.

- Doing what is "right and just" and defending "the cause of the poor and needy" shows people you are God's leader!

You can tell how a leader feels about God by the way he/she treats their people.

- But that was NOT who Jehoiakim was...verse 17:

17 "But your eyes and your heart
are set only on dishonest gain,
on shedding innocent blood
and on oppression and extortion."

- At this point we might imagine Jehoiakim saying to Jeremiah: "So what? Who cares? I'll tell what the GOLDEN RULE is "he who has the gold rules!"
- Jeremiah says...here's what God says about your theory:

18 Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:

"They will not mourn for him:
'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!'
They will not mourn for him:
'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!'
19 He will have the burial of a donkey—
dragged away and thrown
outside the gates of Jerusalem."

- Jehoiakim you're gonna wind up dead and they'll treat your body like the carcass of a donkey!
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- You see had, this had been spelled out in Old Testament law in what we today call the book of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 28:15 (NIV)
Curses for Disobedience

15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you: (then verse 26)

26 Your carcasses will be food for all the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away.

- Does scripture tell us if this is how Jehoiakim died? No exactly...
- 2 Kings 24:6 simply says "he slept with his fathers."
- However, in this kind of account of the death of a king the writer usually tells us where he was buried...we can infer he was NOT given a decent burial.
- Jeremiah turns his message away from the evil king to the people of Judah:

20 "Go up to Lebanon and cry out,
let your voice be heard in Bashan,
cry out from Abarim, for all your allies are crushed.

(These were regions they thought might help them fight against the Babylonians...those regions were also crushed in God's judgment for idol worship.)

21 I warned you when you felt secure,
but you said, 'I will not listen!'
This has been your way from your youth;
you have not obeyed me.

- So what's the point for you and me?
- We said earlier,
- **You can tell how a PERSON feels about God by the way he/she treats people.**
- Even if someone was "raised right", and had parents who set a good example, that doesn't guarantee the child will behave the same way.

Our lesson commentary puts it well:

"Ultimately, our behavior is not merely an expression of our personalities or upbringing. It is the result of the choices we make. It grows out of the kind of people we determine to be. Selfless, godly character is the product of a right relationship with the Lord. It is forged through walking with God and obeying his Word." (ETB Adult Commentary - Allan Moseley)

[Optional Conclusion: Christian Quiz on website - <http://www.changingthefaceofchristianity.com/christianity-quiz/>]

It's worth repeating:

**You can tell how a PERSON feels about God by the way he/she treats people.
And...**

Selfless, godly character is the product of a right relationship with the Lord. It is forged through walking with God and obeying his Word.

So what's The Takeaway?

- God is honored when you and I treat others fairly and compassionately...especially the helpless.
- On the other hand we hurt the cause of Christ when we seem to LOVE stuff and USE PEOPLE instead of the other way around.

Optional Conclusion:

Optional Conclusion: Christian Quiz on website: Changing the Face of Christianity

These are convicting questions. If we took the quiz and were honest, we'd no doubt be embarrassed. But none of us can live a life that pleases God on our own. It can only be done through a CLOSE relationship with Him.

It bears repeating:

Selfless, godly character is the product of a right relationship with the Lord. It is forged through walking with God and obeying his Word.

Christianity Quiz <http://www.changingthefaceofchristianity.com/christianity-quiz/>

1. When someone recklessly cuts you off in traffic, do you:

Say or "gesture" angrily at the other driver

Not get angry, but think about what COULD have happened to you and your passengers

Thank God you weren't hurt, and pray for the safety of other drivers

Control your tongue/temper, but think angry thoughts

2. How often do you read your Bible and/or have quiet time with the Lord?

Rarely or no more than once a month

Once weekly or at least several times a month

Once daily or at least several times a week

Throughout the day, only missing occasionally

3. When you talk to people with different opinions, do you:

Listen and seek to understand them, but work to convince them you are right

Interrupt them frequently to tell them what you think OR think less of them if they don't agree with you

Act like you are listening, while really thinking about what you will say when they finish talking

Listen and seek to understand them because you love them (convincing them is not as important as understanding them)

4. When times are tough and things aren't going your way in life, which of the following looks like you:

I stress and worry a lot

I am mostly worry free, because I know God will take care of me

I stress and worry all the time

I worry a little, but I hope that God will take care of me

5. How have you been transformed by your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your savior?

I see the world through God's eyes and seek to do His will in all things

I don't feel, think, or act differently than most of the non-Christians I know

I occasionally think about God, but mostly just do what I want

I often consider what God wants in my life and try, but struggle consistently to put those thoughts into action

6. When you do something good for others, do you do it because:

You feel obligated (guilty, pushed into it)

It makes you feel good

You love God and others and want to bring Him glory

It will make you look better to others

7. A murderer sentenced to death accepts Christ as his Lord and Savior the day before he's executed. This causes you:

Comfort, believing he was forgiven

Wonder and amazement that God is so full of mercy and love for His people

Frustration, since he's going to heaven just like you, but he didn't "earn" it

Anger, because murderers should not go to heaven

8. You learn that a friend is cheating on their spouse. You:

Express your disappointment, but try to rationalize the friend's behavior

Feel morally superior and secretly judge the friend

Express your disappointment, and tell them what you would do

Give Biblical counsel and encouragement and pray for healing in their marriage

9. How often do you do things privately/secretly compared to when you are around other people? (in other words, keeping secret, things you would be ashamed or embarrassed about if you were caught doing)

Daily or several times a week

Weekly or several times a month

Monthly or several times a year

Rarely (less than once a year)/Never

10. A good friend confides in you that they are a homosexual. Your response would be:

Remain friends, share God's perspective on homosexuality, and continue to love them

Remain friends because there is nothing wrong with homosexuality

Remain friends even though you silently believe homosexuality is a sin

Tell them you can't be friends with a homosexual sinner

