

Category:

Dowlan Road Church—Benjamin Lee

Introduction:

1. They had it all. D.J. Pettway, Tyler Hayes, Eddie Williams, and Brent Calloway were all of a part of the Alabama crimson tide football team that recently won the national championship. But they would lose it all. These four freshmen players were arrested for their involvement in two robberies on campus and fraudulent use of a credit card shortly after winning the national title. Pettway, Williams and Hayes are charged with two counts of second-degree robbery. Williams and Calloway, who were not accused in the robberies, are charged with fraudulent use of a credit card. Eddie Williams confessed to robbing a student who was punched and kicked until he was unconscious. He said Pettway and Hayes watched him commit another robbery from a nearby vehicle about an hour later. Hayes admitted to participating in the first robbery and watching the second. One moment they were champs. Now they're criminals.
2. Alabama coach Nick Saban dismissed these four from the team as more details emerged. Coach Saban should be commended for that decision. As I was reading Coach Saban's comments something stood out to me. He said "...Some people learn by words, some people learn by consequences, some people can't learn." There's one thing these four boys lost when they committed these crimes. It's worth more than their scholarships. It's worth more than an NFL contract. It's worth more than gold. It was their good name, Proverbs 22:1. You don't have to be like them. Learn from God's word the value of a good name. The Bible says a lot about reputation. A good name is the idea of being viewed in a positive light. It is the position you have in the eyes of others.
3. From Proverbs 22:1 there are some lessons to learn the right way regarding your good name.

The Lesson:

I. Your reputation matters

- A. These four boys failed to realize how valuable their reputation really was.
 1. In the coming weeks they will have to stand before a judge to be sentenced. They have requested youthful offender status. But their sentence has already begun.
 - a. Their names are all over the internet. Nothing good is being said about them.
 - b. They have embarrassed their teammates and coaches.
 - c. If they go back to college, they will have answer questions about this matter.
 - d. They will have to check the box on job applications that say, "Have you ever been arrested?" They can count a lot of good jobs goodbye.
 - e. They have disappointed their parents and family members.
 2. They will be haunted by this the rest of their lives. It only takes a few seconds to destroy your good name, but it will take a long time to get it back.
- B. God wants you to learn that your reputation matters.
 1. Sometimes young people say, "I don't care what others think of me. I'm going to live my life." This is foolish. You should care.

2. While we don't live our lives for the sake of others, we can't go to the extreme and say how we live and what others think doesn't matter, because it does. Having a good name is valuable, Proverbs 22:1. It should be sought after more than money. It's a blessing to have others view you in high regard, Proverbs 10:7. Reputation matters.
 - a. It matters in the business arena.
 - b. It matters when you want to use someone as a reference. It's not possible to recommend someone for a job when you know them to be lazy and indifferent.
 - c. It will matter when you want to get married. No dad wants their daughter to marry a boy who has a reputation of being lazy or having no interest in God.
3. It matters because we represent Jesus, Matthew 5:13-16. We want to represent God in such a way so that He will receive glory. Reputation matters, Acts 6:1-3, 16:2, 1 Timothy 3:1-8. People in the world are watching us, 1 Peter 2:12. This is why how we live and how others view is so important. Reputation matters.

II. You must protect it

- A. God through His word teaches us how you can guard and increase your reputation.
 1. From Proverbs 22:1 we learn the value of a good name. From this you need to protect your name at all costs. There are some simple things you can do to accomplish this.
 - a. Keep your word. If you say you will do something then do it, Matthew 10:45. You want others to see you as trustworthy and reliable.
 - b. Think before you speak, James 1:19. Words are powerful. How you use them will go a long way in building your reputation. Before you speak make sure that your words are true, Proverbs 8:8. Make sure they are kind and helpful, Colossians 4:6.
 - c. Think before you post online. Don't be stupid. What you post shows who you are. Immodest photos, profane language, and liking stupid pages will ruin your reputation. Matthew 5:13-16 still applies even on Facebook.
 - d. Be on time. Being constantly late to class, work, appointments, or worship services will hurt your reputation. Being on time is a matter of discipline, 1 Corinthians 9:27.
 - e. Do things right, Ephesians 6:5-7; Colossians 3:22-25. Even in tough environments do things the right way. Strive for excellence.
 - f. Be pleasant, Philippians 1:5. Have a positive disposition. People flock to those who have a positive attitude.
 - g. Say thank you, Luke 17:15-18. Show appreciation to others. Life is not all about you.
 - h. Put the spotlight on God. This is what it's all about, Matthew 5:13-16.
 2. These simple things will go a long way.

Conclusion:

1. Reputation matters, Proverbs 22:1. The question is, how will you learn this? Don't be foolish.
2. Be wise with your choices now, and you will reap the benefits later, Ephesians 5:6-17.