

## Guarding Your Family's Name

Ponder: What is your family's reputation?

Scripture: "praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:47a, NKJV).

My parents admonished my siblings and me not to behave in any way that would spoil the good reputation of our family. "Don't ruin the family name!" Being among the ranks of senior citizens, I now understand my parents' concern. A good reputation takes years to build but can be wiped out in a moment. I know I did some foolish things which, had they come to light, would have reflected badly on my family; I suspect my siblings did too!

Christians are part of God's family, the church. Not surprisingly, our Heavenly Father wants His family to have a good name (reputation). The early Jerusalem church earned a good reputation as they worshiped reverently and cared compassionately for those in need. Later the church came to be hated, but not for anything evil they did; it was because they proclaimed the gospel.

Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for tolerating "such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 5:1). When you add that to brethren suing each other in pagan courts and their chaotic circus atmosphere in their assemblies, you can only imagine what a horrible reputation that church had in their community!

I want my biological family to have a good name, but of greater concern is the church. What is the reputation of the church where you are? No, we are not to be men-pleasers; but does the community know the church for its positive influence in morality and care for those in need? Is the church an example of unity (John 17:20-21) and love (John 13:35)?

Sometimes the world will hate the church despite our best efforts. When that happens, let it be for the same reasons the word hated Jesus. May we never give the world legitimate reasons to think ill of us. Let's guard the reputation of our family!

Hymn: "I Love Thy Church, O God"

Prayer: Gracious Father, thank You for the church and for making us part of it. May we always zealously guard the reputation of our spiritual family. Please forgive us when we fail to do that. In Jesus' name, Amen.