

## A Little Respect

**R**odney Dangerfield, the sad sack comic, made a mint with “I don’t get no respect.” To validate his complaint, he’d say:

“I tell ya, when I was a kid, all I knew was rejection. My yoyo, it never came back.”

“What a dog I got. His favorite bone is my arm. He keeps barking at the front door. He don’t want to go *out*; he wants *me* to *leave*.”

“My uncle’s dying wish was to have me sit in his lap. He was in the electric chair at the time.”

“When I was born, I was so ugly that our pediatrician, Dr. Vidi-boom-ba, advised my mother to feed me with a slingshot.”

### *What’s In A Name?*

Smart marketers cherish their good name, their brand. It builds respect, reputation and customer loyalty. The most powerful global brand, Microsoft, is valued at \$62 Billion. General Electric’s at 55.8, Coca Cola 41.4, Marlboro 38.5, Wal-Mart 37.6 and newcomer Google at 37.4. That’s a lot of respect. What’s your reputation worth?

My fellow Memphian, Aretha Franklin, the “Queen of Soul,” immortalized “*R-e-s-p-e-c-t*” whose Latin root means “to look back, to have regard for.” Webster explains:

“**Respect** marks the estimation we have for another ... for the qualities of mind and heart.” *Reputation* means to reflect upon, to consider. It’s an opinion, “the estimation in which a person or thing is held.” A respectable name is what we hope to build, isn’t it? But taken to obsessive extremes, one hears, “Who does he think he is? God?” When the Son of God came to earth, who’d He think *He* was?

**Here’s who: Philippians 2:1-18 and 3:1-4:1 (p. 435, MSG).**

**DISCUSS: Why is our reputation so important to us**

**Let’s read James 3:1-10 (p. 505, MSG), Proverbs 18:10 (p. 486, NIV) and Psalm 135:13-14 (p. 466, NIV).**

**DISCUSS:** When you've been unfairly spoken of, how do you handle your feelings? Would your reputation with that person be different if he/she knew you better?

**DISCUSS:** What's your opinion of God? Would it be different if you knew Him better?

**Let's slip into Ephesians 4:29-32 (p. 428, MSG).**

**DISCUSS:** When you don't respect someone, what if anything do you owe that person?

**No loopholes here in Romans 13:8-10 (p. 845, NIV).**

Amy Carmichael left Ireland and opened an orphanage in India, serving there for fifty-five years. Before saying anything about anyone, she'd ask herself three questions: Is it **kind**? Is it **true**? Is it **necessary**? (Hokay, would that leave me "speechless in Seattle?")

### ***What's God's Reputation?***

Popular author/speaker Beth Moore writes, "The well-equipped ancient warrior didn't wait until he was facing the fiercest battle of his life to learn to use his shield. He practiced in advance. God taught me a specific way to practice taking up my shield of faith, and I use the method constantly in and out of heated battles. He equipped me with a five-statement pledge of faith that encompasses virtually everything we're challenged to believe."

These five are all we need to know about respect and reputation:

***#1 God is who He says He is.***

**Does He demand respect? See Exodus 3:1-6 (p. 43, NIV).**

***#2 God can do what He says He can do.***

**And just what is that? Jude 24 (p. 909, NIV).**

***#3 I am who God says I am.***

**That's in Galatians 2:15-21 (p. 410 MSG), 1 Corinthians 6:11 (p. 850 NIV) and 1 John 5:9-13 (p. 907, NIV).**

***#4 With Christ, I can deal with anything.***

This comes from Philippians 4:11-13 (p. 874, NIV).

*#5 God's Word is alive and active in me.*

It's here in 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (p. 471, MSG).

### *Ultimate Respect*

God alone deserves the seat of highest honor in our life. Above Him there is no other. He is supreme, sovereign, all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere-present. He's always existed, always will. He's named billions of stars; yet He knows *your* name! Above all, He let His only Son Jesus exit heaven for thirty-three years and live as fully-God-fully-man to take your place and mine on a Roman cross. There, once and for all, He served the death sentence we should've paid, paving the way for our sins to be forever forgiven. Heaven and hell are not sci-fi creations. Choosing your destination is life's do-or-die decision that's due our utmost respect. Want to talk it over?

### **HOW TO ACCEPT GOD'S GIFT OF TOTAL FORGIVENESS:**

- "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).
- "We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. ... God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus" (Romans 3:22-26).

- “For by grace you have been saved, through faith--not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).
- “Whoever believes in the Son of God inwardly confirms God's testimony. Whoever refuses to believe in effect calls God a liar, refusing to believe God's own testimony regarding his Son. This is the testimony in essence: God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son. So, whoever has the Son, has life; whoever rejects the Son, rejects life. My purpose in writing is simply this: that you who believe in God's Son will know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you have eternal life, the reality and not the illusion” (1 John 5:10-13).

His Deal

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