



# LESSON 11

## Reputation And Character

**Key Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7**

### VOCABULARY

*Pride: an excessively high opinion of oneself*


*Deceive: to lead a person to believe something that is not true; to mislead*


*Haughty: proud and vain to the point of being arrogant*

*Reputation: how a person is generally perceived by others*

*Character: a person's moral nature; the combination of qualities that make one person different from another*

*Ambition: a strong desire to get or become something*







 In this lesson we are going to study about a man who was completely opposed to God's command to honor his parents. His name was Absalom. Find out who Absalom was in 2 Samuel 3:2–3.  
He was the son of King David and Maacah.

 Describe Absalom from 2 Samuel 14:25–28. Include what these verses say about his attitude toward his father. Absalom was highly praised for his handsome appearance more than any other man in Israel. There was no blemish in him. When he cut his hair, it weighed 200 shekels. He had three sons and a daughter. He lived close to David, his father, but had not seen him for two years.

Absalom was a very handsome man, the son of a king who had no trouble making friends because everyone praised him. Absalom should have been able to have a happy and joyful life with all that God had given him. But he had a great weakness—the wrong heart attitude. The kind of heart attitude you have—your true inner character—determines the kind of life you will lead. Absalom's "heart problem" ruined his life.


## A Rebellious Son

Absalom was a rebellious son because he tried to take over his father's kingdom. Begin reading 2 Samuel 15 and answer the following questions to see how Absalom worked out his deceitful ambition. He wanted the kingdom for himself.

-  What was Absalom's purpose in the beginning (vv. 4–6)? He wanted to be appointed a judge and administer justice in the land.
-  What religious lie did Absalom tell his father, King David (vs. 7)? He said he wanted to go to Hebron to fulfil a vow to the Lord.
-  Where did he go, and what was his plan of deceit (vv. 9–10)? Hebron—He sent secret messengers throughout Israel to proclaim that Absalom reigned as king in Hebron.
-  What did David find that his son had done (vv. 12–13)? Absalom had led a strong conspiracy against him and had stolen the hearts of the people.
-  What did King David do then (vs. 14)? He decided to flee to Jerusalem to escape from Absalom.
-  In what ways had Absalom broken God's commandment to honor his father and mother? He had neither honored nor obeyed them but had led a rebellion against their authority.

## Good Reputation Or Good Character?

Absalom was a rebellious son because he tried to take over his father's kingdom. The following words describe some of Absalom's sin problems.

-  Write their meanings to make sure you understand what was wrong in Absalom's heart.
- Rebellion: to resist or defy an established authority
  - Pride: an excessively high opinion of oneself
  - Deceit: leading others to believe something that is not true
  - Reputation: how a person is generally perceived by others

- Character: a person's moral nature; the combination of qualities that make one person different from another
- Ambition: a strong desire to get or become something

Do you remember when we studied the difference between our external characteristics and our internal character? Basically, reputation refers to what others see of us on the outside. It is external. Our character is what we really are on the inside. We can hide poor character for a while, but soon our character will affect our reputation.

**Life Principle:** We can look good to others on the outside, but if our internal character is not right, it will soon be evident to others.


Absalom's inner character of pride, rebellion, and deceit finally led to his downfall. At first, others only saw a handsome man who seemed to be a great leader. But Absalom's purposes were wrong within his heart, so he eventually had to fail. God could not bless his life.


## The Results Of Pride And Rebellion


Absalom had started his rebellion in Hebron and had gained many followers. Now he was so popular that he was welcomed in Jerusalem where the king himself lived. He told the people, "My father isn't taking care of you properly," and he stole the people's hearts. Absalom's reputation was excellent.


Absalom had built an army, and now he led his army against his own father. How great his pride was now! He had rejected both his father and the Lord. God would not bless him now.

Before you learn what happened to Absalom, notice his father's attitude toward his son even after his rebellion.

 What did David command his men to do (2 Sam. 18:5)? to be gentle with Absalom


 Describe the battle that took place because of Absalom's rebellious heart (2 Sam. 18:7-8).  
David's men defeated Israel's army, and 20,000 men died.


 What was the final outcome of Absalom's life (2 Sam. 18:9-15)? His head was caught in an oak tree, and Joab plunged three javelins into his heart.

 How did David feel when he learned of his son's death (2 Sam. 18:32-33)? He wept and said he would have been willing to die in his place.


## The Results Of Humility


Now that we have seen the results of pride and rebellion in the life of Absalom, let's see what the Bible has to say about the opposite of pride—humility. What do these verses teach about how God treats those who are meek and humble?

 Proverbs 15:33: \_\_\_\_\_ **Humility leads to honor.** \_\_\_\_\_

 Proverbs 22:4: \_\_\_\_\_ **Humility is rewarded with riches and honor and life.** \_\_\_\_\_

 Proverbs 29:23: \_\_\_\_\_ **Humility leads to honor.** \_\_\_\_\_


 Luke 14:11: \_\_\_\_\_ **Those who humble themselves are exalted.** \_\_\_\_\_


 1 Peter 5:5: \_\_\_\_\_ **God gives grace to the humble.** \_\_\_\_\_


## Winning Your Race


You can never understand how very much your parents love you. When you are proud, rebellious, or disrespectful, it hurts them very much. But they still love you and want your life to be right.

Absalom's life looked successful to his followers because he had a good reputation. But in the eyes of God, he had to fail. This was because his inner character was wrong, and he had failed to keep the first commandment with a promise.

 What was this commandment? **Honor parents.**

 Notice again the definitions of "reputation" and "character." Which is more important to God?  
**character**

 Which will God bless? **character**

 Which will therefore bring you a joyful, successful life? **character**

