

Ron Armstrong • February 23 & 24, 2019
Didn't See That Coming: Character Catastrophe

Romans 7:21-23 It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

24 I've tried everything, and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

25 The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind; but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different. (The Message)

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8** Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9** Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Proverbs 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

A. It's character that determines capacity and ACCOMPLISHMENT.

1. People think talent or competency determines capacity, but they don't.
 - a. Stories of highly TALENTED people damaging their opportunity to lead appear daily.

- b. Accomplishments are often prevented by poor character; sometimes accomplishments are ECLIPSED by it.
2. Success on the outside can make our character issues even more DANGEROUS to us.
3. So how do you spot a character problem when you look so good? A few symptoms:
 - a. There is a growing gap between your PUBLIC life and your private life.
 - b. You're hiding things.
 - c. You fail to follow through on what you SAY.
 - d. You JUSTIFY bad actions or decisions instead of embracing them.
 - e. Your life is mostly about YOU.
4. A lack of character kills careers, shatters families, and ruins friendships. But even if it didn't, it chips away at joy and closeness with others.

B. Five habits to build or repair character.

1. Pay TWICE as much attention to your character as you pay to your competency.
2. Practice REPENTANCE and embracing your role in the problem, fight, or failure.
3. Hold yourself accountable for your words.
4. Weed out pride and image-building LIES.
5. Practice virtuous (not legalistic) behavior. It raises your confidence in what God can do in you. Let's draw a couple:

C. Do you want to be a good man or a great man?