

“The Report”

Although, the cliché that states “actions speak louder than words” is true, I would submit that “words coupled with actions” will drive the point home further and quicker. Such is the plight of every follower of Jesus Christ. It is easy to say one thing and yet live another. The famed author Oswald Chambers writes in his wonderful work, “My Utmost for His Highest”, that “the true test of a person’s spiritual life and character is not what he does in the extraordinary moments of life, but what he does during the ordinary times when there is nothing tremendous and exciting happening.” Oswald Chambers speaks of those moments when no one is watching and the spotlight has gone away and, although an extremely valid point and should be adhered to, the Bible also highlights times when what we do in the spotlight is just as important if we are to glorify God. The question becomes “how is my life, my daily actions, my works, my words and all that I am bring others to praise God? What is the report that people can hear about me that will cause them to praise God? Do I even have a report to speak of?” These are serious questions to ask oneself. You see, the day you and I decided to make Jesus Lord, we forfeited the right to live a “secret agent” Christian life. Whether you want to face it or not, everyday you and I are in the spotlight, and what we do or do not do will either cause others to praise God or not. Our actions will bring about three responses from people with regards to how they will praise God.

The first response will be nothing and that is because you do nothing. It is very simple. Since you do nothing, they say nothing. Secondly, they will praise God because of what you have done in actions and words. They will see the life giving and life changing power of Jesus in you and praise God for it. Or thirdly, they will doubt, question, denigrate, and even mock God because of your actions. Here is an example to illustrate the third response. Recently, a brother in Christ mentioned how God was changing his life and was blessing him with good fortune. He was as excited as he could be about his re-energized relationship with the Lord and was telling everyone about it. Truly, I could see that God was working in his life, however, this pumped up guy was still living with his girlfriend with whom he had a child out of wedlock. So, while he is praising God to his unsaved friends, he is living in sin and his friends know it. This will cause his unsaved friends, family, and whoever knows him to further doubt, question, and even mock the life changing power of Jesus. Thus, creating a horrible report for others to hear.

We can see the power of a good report and how it relates to others praising God when we read in the Bible where the actions of the apostle Paul caused others to praise God (Galatians 1:24). In fact, Paul, who had previously persecuted Christians and the church of God (vs. 13), had such a radical change in lifestyle, that even those who had not met him personally had heard the report and praised God because of him. Think of that amazing feat for a moment! Paul’s actions and words were so powerful, effective, and moving that just the *report of it* was enough for those personally unknown to him to praise God (v. 22). This forces us to take a hard look at ourselves and wonder if we are demonstrating in our actions and words those things that create praise to God by those that do not personally know us. Or, are our words and actions creating further doubt in the minds of others and only driving them further from Jesus? If you were to ask yourself which of the three responses you are causing people to give, what would the answer be? What would Jesus say the answer is?

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