



No More Hockey Sticks.

“A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume. And the day you die is better than the day you are born.”
Ecclesiastes 7:1 (NLT)

Steven Covey's Habit 2 in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* is simple: **“Begin with the end in mind.”** Long before him, the author of *Ecclesiastes* had reached the same conclusion.

What will your reputation be on the day you die? Will there be greater celebration than on the day you were born?

Years ago, when I led teams developing new medical devices, we'd build business cases to justify the investment. The hardest situations came when we conceived a product that had never existed before. With little data to guide us, we latched onto market trends and began to speculate. A dangerous trap. How easy it is to overestimate the positive!

Soon our financial models would show what we called a *Hockey Stick*. Have you seen one? It's straight for most of its length, then suddenly

curves upward at the end. In reviewing the business plan, upper leadership would point out that bend with a big red arrow labeled: “Miracle Happens Here!”

*“Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride.”
(Ecclesiastes 7:8)*

Overly optimistic, our prideful thinking made these plans unrealistic, and the leaders quickly spotted a disastrous finish—they were never approved.

Is your Kingdom reputation following the same “Hockey Stick”—overflowing with prideful optimism for the ending? Are you thinking, “Compared to the way the world’s going, I’m doing pretty well,” and risking a disastrous finish?

“...May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him.” The Apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)

If you’re saved, your “Miracle Happens Here!” has already occurred—there’s rejoicing in Heaven! Yet what’s the evidence on earth say? Have you a reputation of one who honors Jesus?

There are no more Hockey Sticks from here.

Reflect: If I died today, what would be my Kingdom Reputation?

Imagine listening to this eulogy at a professing Christian’s funeral:

“He was a great guy—the life of the party. Always telling jokes—

sometimes a little raunchy, but so funny! A successful businessman too. Sure, he worked all the time away from his family, but he was a great provider. I loved when he got a new car—he'd always let me drive it. A few times, he even invited a bunch of us to join him on his private jet to go to a game. Such a great guy!"

What does it reveal about the life he lived, his reputation?

Many of us quietly persuade ourselves, *"I'm well liked and clearly blessed by God. I'm doing pretty good."*

But God calls us to a higher standard:

"Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you." The Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 6:17)

Loved by his friends—a pretty good guy by the world's standards.

But **did he build** a Kingdom Reputation—distinct from the world? One that honored the name of Jesus?

Consider: A Kingdom Reputation is built with this end in mind: Jesus-like character.

Have you envisioned the essence of a Kingdom Reputation? It's infused with Jesus-like character:

- **Love** – selfless, sacrificial, unconditional
- **Humility** – servant heart, not seeking honor
- **Holiness** – pure, set apart
- **Obedience** – fully surrendered to the Father
- **Compassion** – tender toward those suffering

- **Truthfulness & Righteousness** – steadfast in justice and word
- **Servanthood & Self-Sacrifice** – prioritizes others above self; willing to endure for them
- **Courage & Patience** – bold yet longsuffering; steadfast under opposition

What might change if you set your mind on this endpoint: Jesus-like character?

On a scale of 1–10, where do you stand on each trait? Ask yourself, **“How can I be a little more like Jesus today?”**

Imagine: At my funeral, people testify, “He (She) loved Jesus... and me too!”

Covey goes on to define Habit 3, **“Put First Things First,”** making today a step toward your desired end. He says, **“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”**

What if you set your priority to **Jesus-like character**? How might your daily decisions—where you spend your time, abilities, money, and your attitude—build toward this end?

You might be surprised by how much faith this requires! Conflicts will be plentiful—that’s why so many reach an undesired end point: **a weak Kingdom reputation**. Be different! Follow the Spirit’s prompting, and he will give you the power you need to stay on target each day. If you trip, get back on track the very next day.

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Jesus Christ

(Matthew 22:37-39)

Will you be known for this? Will your life bring honor to Jesus' name? At your funeral, will people say, "He (She) loved Jesus... and me too"? Start today, because there are...

No More Hockey Sticks.

Go off the grid and ask these questions:

Coach's Questions

- **Reflect:** "What might my spouse or my kids say at my funeral?"
Be specific.
- **Ask:** "Which trait of Jesus' character do I struggle with the most?"
- **Act:** Identify one small, daily step in this area. Put it on your calendar and protect it vigilantly.
- Don't know my Mission? [Start here!](#)

Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

How's my Kingdom Reputation today?

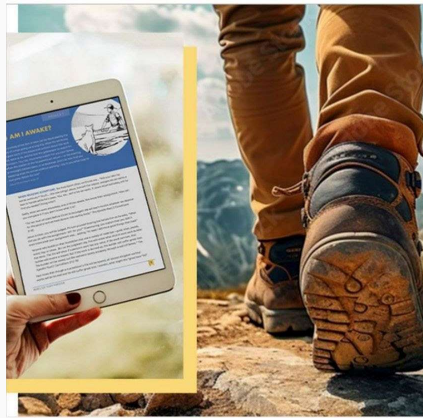
"Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith."

The Apostle Paul | 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT)



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2. **Find the power of your life's Mission**—inspired work, aligned life, direction
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~ DAN B.
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