

## MONDAY MANNA

1 November 2021

### REBUILDING YOUR REPUTATION

By Rick Boxx

We all make mistakes. Sometimes we make big ones. In business, when you make a big mistake, your employees, customers, suppliers, and sometimes even the media, learn about and communicate your mistakes to others. Mistakes can greatly damage our reputation and undermine our growth opportunities. It takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, but it can be destroyed in an instant.

However, these mistakes can help us learn and become better people and workers, even as the fallout from our bad decisions and actions lingers, sometimes for years.

Rebuilding one's reputation isn't easy. It takes time and consistent effort. We find one of the best examples of this in the Bible – the person of Saul, the persecutor of Christians, who became Paul, the Christian evangelist. In Acts 9:22 we read about his dramatic and unlikely transformation after a unique encounter with Jesus Christ while traveling to the city of Damascus: *“But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.”*

How did he rebuild his reputation? Basically, he followed a three-step process of humbly confessing his mistakes, doing the hard work and finding an advocate. Let's look at each of these:

The first step Paul took was to **confess his mistakes**. We read about this in Acts 22:19, when Paul confessed his past sins: *“Lord, I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.’”*

If you have made a mistake that damaged your reputation, begin the journey of restoring your reputation by confessing your mistakes, without making excuses. A humble and genuine confession, instead of a cover-up or trying to offer justification, will be your first step in restoring your reputation.

Paul's second step was to enhance his reputation by **doing the hard work of building trust**. This is usually a slow process, but we need to demonstrate and live a changed life, day-in and day-out. When we make promises, then follow through on them, it rebuilds trust and begins to bolster our reputation.

Acts 9:28 says, *“So Saul stayed with (the disciples) and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.”* If you desire to restore your reputation, make the commitment to do the hard work of building trust day after day after day – for as long as it takes.

The final step Paul used was to **find an advocate**, someone to stand up on his behalf and vouch for the positive change in his life. Understandably, Jesus' disciples didn't want to meet, hear or see Paul. He had been their arch enemy, persecuting and imprisoning their brothers and sisters in the faith. They were more likely to believe a leopard could change its spots.

Fortunately, he found an advocate in Barnabas, a courageous leader in the early Church. Acts 9:27 tells us, *“But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.”* Because Barnabas was trusted as a man of great integrity, the disciples gave Paul a chance. If you have a damaged reputation and really have changed, find an influential advocate.

*Copyright 2021, Unconventional Business Network. Adapted with permission from "UBN Integrity Moments", a commentary on faith at work issues. Visit [www.unconventionalbusiness.org](http://www.unconventionalbusiness.org) UBN is a faith at work ministry serving the international small business community.*

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions**

Why is it, do you think, that a person can devote an entire life and career to building a good reputation, but through one bad decision or action can destroy that reputation, making it nearly impossible to recover? Do you think this is right – or fair? Explain your answer.

Have you ever done anything that significantly damaged your reputation? If so, what steps did you take (or are you taking) in trying to rebuild it? How would finding an advocate, someone to stand up on your behalf, be of help?

How easy is it to confess one's mistakes, especially if they are of great magnitude? What factors can stand in the way of sincere, wholehearted confession and repentance?

Saul had done unspeakable things in persecuting early followers of Jesus Christ, yet he was forgiven – first by God, and then by Christ's disciples. How was that possible? Do you think you have truly reached the point of being forgiven and restored by God for your wrongdoings?

*NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:*

Isaiah 53:6, 61:1-3

Romans 3:10,23

2 Corinthians 5:17

Colossians 3:12-13

James 5:16,19-20