

## How Character Is Defined



Will Rogers – “Oklahoma’s Favorite Son,” actor, cowboy, humorist and newspaper columnist – was known for his laughter and his ability to make others laugh, but he also knew how to weep.

One day, he was entertaining an audience at the Milton H. Berry Institute in Los Angeles, a hospital that specialized in rehabilitating polio victims and people with broken backs and other extreme physical handicaps. Of course, Rogers had everybody laughing, even patients in really bad condition.

But suddenly, he left the platform and went to the restroom. Milton Berry followed him to give him a towel. When he opened the door, he saw Rogers leaning against the wall, sobbing like a child.

Berry closed the door, and in a few minutes Rogers appeared back on the platform, as jovial as before.

His behavior is not unlike associates in Life Care and Century Park who have occasions to see those they serve, or their families, in times of personal suffering, brokenness in body or spirit, or fear of the unknown. Their professionalism with a calm and assuring demeanor brings comfort and strength. But sometimes, the tears come.

To learn what a person is really like, three questions may be engaged: What makes him laugh? What makes him angry? What makes him weep?

These are fairly good tests of character that are especially appropriate for Christian leaders.

And character is so important – in the business world as in our personal lives.

W. Michael Blumenthal, business leader, economist and political advisor who served as United States Secretary of the Treasury under President Jimmy Carter, admitted he made some mistakes in hiring. “In choosing people for top positions, you have to try to make sure they have a clear sense of what is right and wrong, a willingness to be truthful, the courage to say what they think and to do what they think is right, even if the politics militate against that. This is the quality that should really be at the top,” he said.

(more)

F.B. Meyer – Baptist pastor and evangelist in England – in his book *Our Daily Walk* – wrote: “The supreme test of goodness is not in the greater but in the smaller incidents of our character and practice; not what we are when standing in the searchlight of public scrutiny, but when we reach the firelight flicker of our homes; not what we are when some clarion-call rings through the air summoning us to fight for life and liberty, but our attitude when we are called to sentry duty in the gray morning when the watch-fire is burning low. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by daily inconsistency, unfaithfulness and besetting sin.”

Character that is shaped in integrity, goodness, compassion and sincerity, is admired, and the individual possessing it is trusted and followed.

*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold (Proverbs 22:1 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter