

Shaping J.C. Penney

If it had not been for a crooked groceryman, J.C. Penney might have become the owner of a grocery store rather than the owner of a dry-goods chain and the nation's leading merchandiser.

When he was a teenager, Penney worked for the owner of a grocery store in Hamilton, Missouri. He liked the work and had plans to make a career of it.

One night he came home and proudly told his family about his "foxy" employer. The grocer had a practice of mixing low-quality coffee with the expensive brand and thus increasing his profit. Penney laughed as he told the story at the supper table.

His father didn't see anything funny about the practice. "Tell me," he said, "if the grocer found someone palming off an inferior article on him for the price of the best, do you think he would think they were just being foxy, and laugh about it?"



Penney could see his father was disappointed in him. "I guess not," he replied. "I guess I just didn't think about it that way."

Penney's father instructed him to go to the grocer the next day and collect whatever money due him, and tell the grocer he wouldn't be working for him any longer.

Jobs were not plentiful in Hamilton, but Mr. Penney would rather his son be unemployed than be associated with a crooked businessman. J.C. Penney came that close to becoming a grocer.

The lesson was not lost on young Penney. He gained a lasting reputation as a man of integrity and was propelled into a different business direction with amazing results. Today, the JCPenney chain – headquartered in Plano, Texas – operates 1,060 stores in 49 states (it doesn't have a presence in Hawaii) and Puerto Rico. Because of trust in its founder and the business practices of the organization, JCPenney reached its peak number of stores in 1973, with 2,053 stores.

J.C. Penney died on Feb. 12, 1971, at the age of 95. Just consider how the influence of a loving father shaped both the man and his contributions to society.

This Sunday, June 21, is Father's Day. It honors all fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers and father figures for their contributions.

(more)

Many of those we serve in Life Care and Century Park are fathers who have sacrificed much for their families. Their sons and daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will be gathering around them in our centers or their homes this Sunday, or calling them on the telephone, to thank them

Let's do all that we can to make those occasions pleasant and joy-filled.

The righteous who walks in his integrity – blessed are his children after him! (Proverbs 20:7 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter