

Use of Fingerprints

While the ancient Assyrians and Chinese were probably among the first peoples to use fingerprints in the signing of legal documents, the English first used fingerprints in July 1858. Sir William Herschel, chief magistrate in India, had a local businessman press his handprint on the back of a contract. The local population believed the personal contact made the contract more binding. Herschel later noticed that fingerprints could prove or disprove identity, since they are unique to the individual and permanent throughout life.

After London police established the first fingerprint files in 1901, the use of fingerprinting as a way to identify criminals spread quickly throughout Europe and the United States. In 1924, the U.S. government set up a central agency within the FBI to manage fingerprint archives throughout the country. Today, the FBI has about 250 million sets of fingerprints in its files.

All of us leave our fingerprints on every situation and every relationship we are involved in. Our fingerprints are our actions. Proverbs 20:11 reminds us that we cannot always judge what people are like by what they say. It's our behavior and lifestyle that reveal our true character. That's how people can identify us.

Believers' "fingerprints" should have special characteristics that infallibly identify them as children of God. We should follow God's commands. We should love each other unselfishly, and have a heart for those who do not yet know God, and for those we serve in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home. We should be daily exhibiting characteristics such as peace, joy, self-control and patience.

That's how we leave our mark in this world.

--Beecher Hunter