

A Good Name

Ponder: What is your reputation?

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

I’m happy to wear the name Joseph. It’s a play on the word “add.” Rachel named her firstborn Joseph as she hoped the Lord would “add” another son to her (Gen. 30:24). But when Solomon said a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, he wasn’t concerned with the name my parents gave me. Instead, he had in mind my reputation.

There are eight or nine Josephs mentioned in Scripture. All of the ones we know much about were good men. But that doesn’t mean I will be known as a good man. That determination will be based on how I treat other people and how (or if) I serve the Lord.

Hebrew scholar Franz Delitzsch says “name” has to do with being well-known. In fact, the word “good” is in italics, indicating it is not part of the Biblical text. James Strong defines “name” as “renown.” By itself, that wouldn’t tell us whether it’s good or bad. Am I famous, or infamous? But the second half of the proverb makes it clear – having a name is parallel with enjoying loving favor. It stands to reason that people will have loving favor toward me if I am well-known for being good, helpful, kind, godly, etc. But if I am an infamous evil-doer, their feelings toward me will be quite different!

Solomon says that good reputation is preferable to great riches (silver and gold). Undoubtedly people who care nothing about God and have no respect for others would disagree. They would rather have the wealth, even if they are despised for their wickedness. But wouldn’t you rather have someone’s loving favor than to have their money while they hate you?

A good name is to be chosen. Yes, you have a choice in this matter! In nearly all cases, you earn your reputation. Even worldly people generally appreciate it when you treat them with respect, kindness, and dignity. You may never be a millionaire, but you’ll be laying up treasure in heaven.

Song: “This Is My Task”

Prayer: Almighty God, please help us to be more like Jesus, who went about doing good. May we lead others to You as they witness godly behavior from us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.