

What's in a Name?

(Proverbs 22:1-16)

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Introduction

In the United States alone, there are 151,671 different last names as of the 2010 census, but only 5,163 different first names..

I searched and there are only 2 people in the US named Bud Moss.

Which actually isn't my name...

It is Gerald Moss and there are 129 people in the US with that name combination...

The most common last name in the world is the Lee.

The second most common last name is Zhang.

Smith, the most common last name in the US is the 7th most common worldwide..

Every once in a while, last names lead to some funny things in the world...

Consider these funny wedding announcements where the two last names give us a good laugh as they were posted in the local newspaper....

First up is...LOONEY WARDE.

Next, we see one of my favorites..WENDT AD-AWAY.

Then we find one that makes us hungry...MAC-DONALD BERGER.

Next is HARDY HARR.

Then we see SHARP PAYNE.

And last, my personal favorite..MOORE BACON.

Sometimes, our names are simply funny...

Well, the Bible places a great importance on names..

Genealogies fill many verses fo the Bible, where it is name after name after name...

Even the mention of someone in the Bible by name brings thoughts to our mind...

David. Moses. Noah. Judas. Paul. Goliath.

And certainly the name Jesus has all sorts of images and ideas attached to it...

Names are important..

Adam and Eve received names soon after they were created...

God uses names to identify people in history..

God uses names to remind us of things...

But on a personal note, what do people think when they hear your name spoken aloud?

What images come to mind when your name comes up?

We all play the name game in sense as we associate both good and bad with a person's name...

With that in mind, let's read verse 1 of Proverbs 22...

***1 A good name is to be more desired than great wealth,
Favor is better than silver and gold.***

In case you didn't already know it, God's wisdom tells us the value of a good name...

It is better to have a good name than a bank account full of gold and silver...

In other words, a good reputation is better than a good bit of wealth...

Now understand, many people would rather have just the opposite, so what they do is trade their reputation for wealth...

And they end up with a bad name but a big bank account...

And sadly, the world doesn't even care..

This is how upside down our world has become...

We now honor the crooked name simply because he has a lot of money...

Someone had defined the good name of verse 1 as a person who lives with godly consistency...

In other words, their name isn't perfect, but the aim of their life is to perfectly obedient to the Lord....

That kind of living gives us a good name...

But what does it mean to live that way?

How do we get that good name?

Well, the first part of Proverbs 22 is going to help us out in that regard..

In fact, the entire book of Proverbs and the entire Bible for that matter teach us how to have a good name in the world..

Now, let's make an important distinction in our minds here in terms of having a good name...

First, having a good name should not be a matter of selfish ambition..

WE don't desire a good name to see how it can benefit us in the world..

Certainly, we understand that a good name has benefits in the world...

But if we seek a good name to get those benefits, we use God's wisdom selfishly, and God is not honored by that at all..

Second, having a good name should now grow our arrogance.

I am seeing an alarming number of people who want to be seen as a Christian due to their own pride.

For some, Christianity causes their noses to go in the air instead of their eyes to lower to the ground...

That is also not the motivation to seek a good name..

I would simply say this....

Set your sights on getting saved and living a godly life, and your name will simply be a side effect of good and godly living...

So, let's find some way to obtain that good name...

We begin in verses 2-4...

We can call this a good name through humility...

I. A Good Name through Godly Humility (2-5)

In verse 2, we see the foundation of humility..

***2 The rich and the poor [a]have a common bond,
The Lord is the maker of them all.***

The foundation of humility is that we see the equality of all people before the Lord..

The Bible is clear - all are made in the image of God...

Both the rich and the poor are bound together in that God has made both of them in his image.

And that common bond should prevent either from rising above the other..

Most commonly, the rich grows his arrogance right alongside his wealth..

But the Lord's wisdom would remind us that pride cannot grow when we remember our common bond with all people...

And that common bond is that God made every single person in His image...

That simple truth grounds us in humility in this world...

We follow that godly humility into verses 3-5...

3

***The prudent sees the evil and hides himself,
But the [b]naive go on, and are punished for it.***

4

***The reward of humility and the [c]fear of the Lord
Are riches, honor and life.***

5

***Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse;
He who guards himself will be far from them.***

Prideful people make prideful choices, while humble people make humble choices..

In this set of verses, evil is in the path of both the prideful and the humble..

The prudent or thoughtful or wise person takes note of the danger and avoids it..

Verse 3 says that he hides himself, but it is not in the sense of cowardice but rather he guards himself from evil...

Think of it this way...

You wisely hide yourself as a tornado approaches...

You know that you can't stop it, so you simply take precautions to lessen the damage...

While the prideful person, who is called naive here, simply continues into the path of trouble...

You see, the attitude of pride is simply, "I can handle this."

"I am fine."

The attitude of humility says this...

"I trust the Lord but I will take care to do everything I can."

The prideful are reckless, while the humble are prepared...

Now take note of verse 4..

What is the reward of humility and prudence and guarding yourself from trouble?

Riches, honor, and life.

Simply put, reckless and arrogant people often die...

Their lack of preparation combines with their prideful arrogance often lead to death..

While the humble and wise person steers clear of trouble and find life...

This is part of the reward for godly humble living...

However, the main point of these verses is that a good name comes from godly humility...

A second way to find a good name is through godly parenting...

II. A Good Name through Godly Parenting (6-15)

Children can bring both honor and shame to their parents...

Clearly, the Bible never teaches that parents are responsible for the actions of their children...

Everyone bears his own responsibility for sin, yet parents have an incredible influence on their children.

So, the Bible speaks often of the need to raise children in the proper way...

And that way is according to the parenting principles of Scripture..

If you look at verses 6 and 15, you find two proverbs relating to good parenting...

Verse 6..

6

***Train up a child [d]in the way he should go,
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.***

The overriding principle of godly parenting is to show your children the right way...

And what is the way to go?

Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life..”

Clearly, the way of verse 6 is the way of the Lord, which would primarily include the teaching children the only way to be saved...

The simple gospel should be taught over and over to children...

The art of raising children is trying to find a way to preach the gospel as often as possible to them..

At the dinner table..

When they are caught in sin.

As they have relationship troubles..

While you watch the television..

During times of personal sadness like death...

During times of disaster and evil in the world..

Those are times to be training our children in the way of the gospel...

Showing them the mercy of Christ that is offered to them by repenting and believing in Christ..

And the principle of the second half of verse is that the child won't depart from the way..

Again, this is no guarantee that Christian parents will raise Christian children..

But the principle is simple...

Plant the way of truth in them often and the chances of seeing a harvest are greater...

If you skip down to verse 15, you will see another proverb related to godly parenting...

15

***Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.***

Another aspect of godly parenting is consistent and firm discipline, even the use of spanking is commend in the Scripture..

The rod of discipline is the idea of physical correction as part of the parenting process...

In fact, the book of Proverbs is going to affirm that some foolishness is so deep in the heart of a child that the rod is the only way to remove it...

Now in 2018, the idea of spanking will not win any points with the culture around us, but the Bible never indicates that spanking loses its effectiveness...

In fact, we have already seen in Proverbs 13 that the parent who refuses to use the rod of discipline hates their child...

It is clear that God commands the use of the rod as part of effective Christian parenting ..

Now, stuck in between verses 6 and 15 are 8 verses that may or may not be related to aspects of Christian parenting, but I am going to present them in that way...

However, these nuggets of wisdom will help us today but they should certainly be part of any wisdom that is passed on to the next generation...

So, let's at these verses in between briefly in terms of teaching the children the proper way of living by God's wisdom in this world...

Verse 7...

7

***The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.***

WE must pass on God's financial wisdom to the next generation, and clearly the Lord warns of debt..

Though going into debt is never prohibited in the Scriptures, you must understand that debt has consequences...

The primary one is debt leads one to servanthood.

In other words, debt is a burden to the borrower...

You are tied to it and must work to overcome it, and those who can avoid it often live much freer lives in general...

Verse 8 gives us another bit of wisdom to pass on to children..

8

***He who sows iniquity will reap vanity,
And the rod of his fury will perish.***

A constant theme of the Scriptures is that man reaps what he sows...

To obey brings blessing and to disobey brings curses..

Children need to understand this wisdom principle from the Lord..

If they sow the seeds of sin, they will reap a harvest of trouble...

Now once again, we must remind ourselves that doing the right thing is no guarantee of a life of ease...

Many people sow the seeds of righteousness and yet they still reap a harvest of trouble...

So, we can't promise these truths to our children as absolute 100% guarantees, but overall the principle of godly living is simple..

Sow the seeds of right living and reap the fruit of right living...

Sow the seeds of bad living and reap the fruit of bad living...

Next we see in verse 9 a great trait to pass on in Christian parenting...

Verse 9...

9

***He who [e]is generous will be blessed,
For he gives some of his food to the poor.***

Kids are born selfish...

It is part of our sinful fallen nature to keep what is ours and even try to gain more..

But the Bible is clear...

God owns it all, but even though he has it all, he shares with us...

Likewise, we should share with others...

We are called to be generous, as our God is generous...

Kids have to be taught this because it will not come naturally...

Verse 10 is also a great bit of wisdom for our children..

10

***Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out,
Even strife and dishonor will cease...***

At first glance, you may wonder what this wisdom principle has to do with children...

But I assure you that every parent has taught the wisdom of verse 10 to their children multiple times...

Here is how it sounds...

Listen to me, don't hang around trouble makers..

The scoffer of verse 10 is simply the troublemaker of our day...

They love drama...

They lead contentious lives that look for arguments and create arguments...

And the principle is simple, stay away from those people...

Drive them out of your life...

Drive them out of the church....

And when they go, drama and trouble will go with them...

It is amazing how the whole mood of a family or a church can change when a trouble maker leaves...

If you don't enjoy drama, don't hang around drama queens..

Verses 11-12 remind parents of the necessity to train their kids how to speak...

Verses 11&12....

11

***He who loves purity of heart
And [f]whose speech is gracious, the king is his
friend.***

12

***The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge,
But He overthrows the words of the treacherous
man.***

It is simply amazing how a well-spoken young man or woman stands out today...

The technology age has reduced our ability to carry on a real conversation...

We can't even spell anymore since we often abbreviate through texting and email...

And I am not here to complain about technology...

It is here to stay and I enjoy many of its benefits but since it is here to stay, we must be very diligent to teach our children the value of being articulate...

In fact, well-spoken people rise to high places like even being the friend of the king in verse 11...

And don't miss the key to gracious speech...

The start of verse 11 reminds us that gracious speech comes from a pure heart..

It is one thing to know how to speak well, but it another thing to know what to say...

Train yourself and train your children to keep a pure heart and the right words will come out in the right way at the right time..

And the need to speak purely and graciously is that God is opposed to the one who speaks treacherously or in an evil manner...

The book of Proverbs has so much to say about the proper use of our words and tongue and speech, and we would do well to teach our children and the next generation the same..

Verse 13 also returns to a common theme of Solomon and that is the necessity to work...

13

***The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside;
I will be killed in the streets!"***

In case you ever wondered about there being any humor in the Bible, you find some of it here..

The lazy man is so lazy that he will look for any excuse not to work...

Even to the point that he makes the excuse of not leaving the house for fear of being killed by a lion..

This is clearly a ridiculous excuse, yet the point is clear...

Lazy people can always find an excuse not to work...

The point of these verses is clear...

God's wisdom teaches us to work, and any parent desiring to teach their kid the way to go should teach them the way of work...

Verse 14...

14

***The mouth of [g]an adulteress is a deep pit;
He who is cursed of the Lord will fall [h]into it.***

How soon should you teach someone the dangers of sexual immorality?

Answer...

As soon as you possibly can..

Though there is an age appropriateness to these talks, parent must realize that these conversations are part of training their children in the way to go...

Clearly, parents must teach about proper sexual behavior that occurs within God blessed marriage relationships...

But even sexual sins like adultery, homosexuality, fornication, etc. must also come from the parent...

In this proverb, the parent is wise to teach their children about the adulterous man or woman who seeks to lure them in with words...

But their sweet words even become a deadly trap..

In a day where sexual sins are out of control, parents must be faithful to their God-given role as teacher and encourager and disciplinarian to their children

If you don't teach your children about sexuality, the world will gladly do it.

That brings us back to verse 15 which speaks of the necessity to include discipline as part of training children in the way to live...

This leads us to one final verse tonight...

It is verse 16...

If humility leads to a good name, and Christian parenting leads to a good name...

Verse 16 is also another way to find a good name with the Lord...

We can call this..

III. A Good Name through Godly Trust (16)

16

He who oppresses the poor to make [i]more for himself

Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.

Though verse 16 seems offer financial wisdom, there seems to be more going on here...

In the first half of the verse, we see someone who takes from the poor...

In the second half of the the verse, we see someone who gives to the rich...

And the reason for that is that neither person trusts in the Lord..

The person in the first half of the verse takes from the poor to benefit himself..

While the person in the second half of the verse gives to the rich in the form of bribe which is also designed to benefit himself...

Financial worry leads someone to either take advantage of the poor or bribe the rich...

And the source of financial worry is always a lack fo trust in God's provision...

And someone who lacks trusts in the Lord will never find a good name in this world...

While the one who displays trust in the Lord usually finds a good name among his friends and with the Lord..

If we think of people who showed an incredible trust in the Lord, we normally think of people who have a good reputation with God and men...

If you want a good name, put your faith in the name of the Lord..

Conclusion

When we think of names in the world, we often think of famous names of important families...

The Kennedys

The Rockefellers..

The Bushes..

To have those names is a sign of success even from birth...

Yet, none of those names that have fame in the world necessarily have fame with God..

God is not concerned with names that have fame with man but rather names that have fame with Him..

And the way to having a good name with God comes through repentance and faith in Christ and living by the wisdom of God in the world..

As we think of the Scriptures, there is so much in a name...

The Bible says that salvation is found in name, which is the name of Christ...

But guess what we also see in the Bible regarding a name?

There are names in the book of life that will ensure a person's right to get into heaven...

Some of the names in that book will have never made a single headline in the world's most important newspapers and books...

But the reality is that those names appear in the only book that truly counts...

And that is God's book of life...

And having your name in that book is worth way more than all the gold and silver in the world...

Amen?

Amen!

Let us pray.