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**Proverbs 22:1 NIV.**

*A good name is more desirable than great riches;  
to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*

**A Good Name and a Good Website Name.**

My website is [buzzking.com](https://buzzking.com). I'm going to start out today with a very brief Bible quote, and then I will give you a little technical presentation about how I obtained my website domain name, which I am quite confident you have all been dying to hear about.

*A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.* Proverbs Chapter 22, verse 1, the NIV. We've talked about the Proverbs before. They were created by a special class of people called Sages. They took the accumulated common sense of their people, collected over thousands of years, and put them into pithy, clever statements. Many people wonder why this material is considered Scripture. Yes, God appears in the Proverbs from time to time, but much of it seems very secular. Here's something to think about. The Israelites and then later the Jews assumed that God created the universe in an orderly fashion, with a preexisting moral code that all should follow. They also assumed that God wants people to use their minds when making decisions. To these people, it was very much a Scriptural thing to take the will of God and boil it down to common sense ways of

living your life. In other words, if you follow the wisdom of the Proverbs, you will find yourself living the way God wants us to. Further, by collecting wisdom that is based on God's will, and by taking that collection and giving it the status of Holy Scripture, you radically increase the likelihood of future generations – like us – paying attention to it. The Proverbs have had a tremendous impact on society from ancient times until now. A major reason for the creation of Scripture, both Jewish and Christian, is to take what we have learned from God and do our best to embed it permanently in our society. Much of what we have codified in our legal system can be found in the Proverbs. They talk of honesty, equity, piety, thoughtfulness, empathy, love, and justice. Indeed, the ancient writers of Hebrew Scripture have had an astonishing impact on American society.

So, let's look at our Proverb for today. Basically, it says that having people hold you in high regard is more valuable than being wealthy. One thing I can say is that reality TV stars could learn a lot from this Proverb. Many people today will do anything for money or public attention, even if it means humiliating or corrupting themselves. But I do believe that if you live in a way that makes people think of you as a decent, innocent, honest person, someone who lives in what we would consider a godly fashion, you will in the end be happier. And I think that most people do believe that happiness does have a significant value. As it turns out, the chapter that begins with our Proverb is mostly about wealth and poverty. We should note, though, that the Book of Proverbs does *not* say that you cannot have both wealth and a good name.

I'd like to get back to this very pressing issue of my personal domain, [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com).

The point is that I haven't always been the owner of that domain. Anyone can buy any dotcom domain, and although it may shock you, I'm not the only Buzz King on Earth. Before I got the idea to try to buy that domain, someone else already had it. I believe he bought it from one of the more popular domain name vendors, Godaddy. I coincidentally tried to buy it from Godaddy myself, but the other Buzz King had gotten to it first. When I found out on the Godaddy website that the domain name was already owned by someone, I went to the [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com) site on a browser. I discovered that the other Buzz King was a rather minimally talented rock'n'roller. To be blunt, his music was so harsh, I found it painful to listen to; and his lyrics were in some ways extraordinarily crude, so crude that I don't want to quote any of them here. So, there I was, looking for a domain name so that I could build myself a website – and it turned out that my name was associated with a rock'n'roller whose name I didn't really want to share. There wasn't anything I could do about it, so I used a different domain name. I put in an order with Godaddy, saying that I would like to buy [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com), if it ever became available. I checked for its availability frequently, and as the years went by, I suspected that I would never own it.

Well, the other Buzz King owned that domain for several years. Then, about eight years ago, when I was a student at the seminary, I got an email from Godaddy telling me that the [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com) domain would be up for sale – but I would have to bid for it. It

turned out that the other Buzz King had missed a few of his payments and now he was going to have to compete with me to get that domain name back. The auction between the two Buzz Kings was going to happen at a specific time, which turned out to be in the middle of one of my classes at the Iliff School of Theology, where I was studying to be a reverend. Before the class, I told the teacher – who was older than me and had no idea what I was talking about – that I was going to have to take part in an online silent auction in the middle of her class so that I could get the domain name [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com). I told her that because my name is kind of unique, I felt offended by the fact that some crude rock’n’roller had the domain name. She just shrugged and said it was okay, that I should do whatever I had to do. Then the day came, and the auction began in the middle of her class. I thought I would just sit there on my computer silently typing away, bidding back and forth with this guy, until the price got too high and one of us dropped out. But the other students were captivated by this and so everyone stopped class and watched as I bid for the domain. It only took about fifteen minutes, with the two of us trading bids back and forth. I had told Wendy that I wouldn’t go any higher than a thousand dollars – which she thought was a crazy amount of money to spend on a domain name – but as it turned out, the other Buzz King dropped out at about four hundred and fifty dollars. I suddenly owned [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com). The class cheered.

But here’s the bottom line. The truth is that I was less motivated by having [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com) as my website than I was by trying to protect my name. I come from the

computing world. I was confident that many people who know me in that community, people from all around the world, would go to [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com) looking for me. That's what people do; they buy their name as a domain, if they can get it. If you are looking for someone with a unique name, you try their name, with dotcom after it. That's what people would do when they wanted to find me on the Internet. What would they find? Some music and lyrics that were not that appealing. That's why I was willing to spend as much as a thousand dollars to get the domain name. You see, *A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*

But a good name goes beyond our individual names. As believers, we need to remember that we represent the Christian Church to the world around us. The Church, the collection of believers, has many names in the Bible. Depending on the translation of the Bible you look at, Psalm 89:7 says that the people of God form the *"assembly of the saints"* or the *"council of the holy ones"*. Romans 12:5 says that we are *"one body in Christ"*, reminding us of the unity we have under God. Isaiah 60:21 calls us the *"branch of God's planting"* and *"the work of God's hands"*; indeed, we are made by God, and in fact, Genesis 1:27 comes right out and says that we have the honor of being *"made in God's image"*. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians calls us *"God's fellow workers"* and *"God's building"*, reminding us that we are God's hands on Earth and that God lives within each of us. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy tells us that we, the Church, are *"the pillar of truth"*. Many times in the New Testament we are referred to as *"saints"*. This is a lot to live up to. We need to value

our good name, not just for ourselves, but for the sake of the Church we represent.

As a professor, I sometimes had student athletes and/or military ROTC students in my class. Almost always, the athletes and the military personnel I taught were the most polite, hard-working, and responsible students. They did not blame me when they got a bad grade. They did not treat me with disrespect. One time, an Air Force ROTC student said something very disrespectful to me publicly in class. Mind you, the ROTC students all wear their uniforms to class; they represented the military at all times. Well, after class, the other two ROTC students in my class told me that they were honor bound to report him. Not only did I get a formal apology from him, but he apparently ended up running laps around the football field while wearing a full backpack.

One of my favorite Bible passages, when it comes to Christian behavior, is Colossians 4:5-6. It says: <sup>5</sup> *Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.* <sup>6</sup> *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.* This tells us how to behave when we are around non-believers. We should walk in wisdom, not stumble in stupidity. We should make efficient use of the time we have with those who have not yet discovered God within them. This is valuable time, an opportunity to touch the life of non-believers. We can spread the faith by how we act. We represent the Church. If people know that we are Christians and they see us act in a kind, empathetic way, this makes the Church look like an inviting place. This passage also says that we should be gracious, seasoned with salt.

Okay, we know what it means to be gracious. But seasoned with salt? What does that mean? In ancient times, they didn't have refrigerators. There was rather little ice in the Middle East. Salt was used to preserve food so that people could survive when it wasn't farming season. Salt was so valuable that it was often used as a currency. It also added taste to something that might otherwise be bland. So, yes, what we say needs to be seasoned with salt – because we must preserve the Church and make it attractive.

After that online bidding process won me the right to buy the domain name [BuzzKing.com](http://BuzzKing.com), I felt elated. I had wrested it away from someone whom I saw as an embarrassment to my name. But that was in truth a selfish thing on my part. I didn't do it because I am a Christian and I was on the path to being a reverend and a pastor. I was only thinking of myself. Still, each of us has a big reason to walk out in the world and be different than other people. We have a reason to take that grace that God has given each of us and to hand it to every person whom we encounter. We have a reason to not just live with joy, but to make it clear what that joy does to our hearts. We live in vengeful times. I don't know if any of you ever read the things that are written on Reddit or in other forums or in the comments on news articles. But people are vicious. If someone gets into the news for doing something politically incorrect, they get brutalized by random people who don't even know them. They are more than shamed. They are condemned with the most cruel, sarcastic words imaginable. There is no grace, no forgiveness. People don't stop and think hey, maybe that person is under a lot of

pressure right now. Maybe they are suffering. Perhaps they deserve some forgiveness.

Americans tend to not behave with generosity. Young people are taught to be vicious on social media. As believers today, it is incredibly important that Christians act with grace. We must make it clear that we do not follow the standards of society.

Let's look at one more passage. Consider Ecclesiastes, the first verse of Chapter 7, from the ESV:

*7 A good name is better than precious ointment,  
and the day of death than the day of birth.*

Ecclesiastes is a very unusual Bible book, and over the centuries, some have suggested that even more than Proverbs it doesn't belong in the canon, the official Bible. Ecclesiastes is written from an earthly perspective. According to the text, the author is *Qoheleth* "*ko-hell-eth*", which is not a person's name. In Hebrew the word means "*one who speaks to an assembly*", and it probably identifies the author as a teacher. The author also identifies himself as the son of King David, as well as a king himself, which would mean that the author would have to be King Solomon. As we have seen before, ancient writers often attributed works to famous people to show respect or simply to give the work more weight, so we can't be sure who wrote it. But the writing in the book is perhaps the sort of writing we might expect of Solomon, given what we know of him. The book shows a scholarly knowledge of the Wisdom literature, and Solomon was closely associated with the works of the



Sages. In the book, traditional, theologically based wisdom statements are juxtaposed with theologically jaded, negative statements about the author's experiences in life. The current form of Ecclesiastes was written around 250 B.C., we think. The book was clearly written over a period of years, and it is a sort of philosophical autobiography. It makes a powerful, very important moral point. The book tells the reader that morality should be unconditional and not based on any perceived rewards from God – but at times, the writer does not appear to believe that humans hold any exalted place in God's universal order, and he does not seem to believe that God will always punish evil. The theology in Ecclesiastes is difficult to comprehend. It is also filled with numerous divergent themes, making the logic of the Book hard to follow. One theme does come through clearly, though: it is hard to find purpose in human life, and so we should take life as it comes and not be anxious. God wants us to live in a moral and ethical fashion, and to enjoy life - and to not be brought down by the chaos and corruption of our society.

So, back to our quote from Ecclesiastes, which gives us another twist on the importance of having a good name:

*7 A good name is better than precious ointment,  
and the day of death than the day of birth.*

This verse begins by telling us that a good name is more valuable than a costly ointment, something that was greatly valued in ancient times. Ointments were

considered a luxury in the world of the Bible, and they were extremely expensive for the average person. They were used for embalming, for cosmetics, for medicine, and for anointing. Then, the author gives us a parallel: likewise, death is better than birth. We might imagine that this is because we get to go be with God forever when we die. Or we could conclude that the author is continuing his pessimistic view of life that we see in Ecclesiastes by saying that death ends our earthly suffering. In truth, though, the point of this verse is to remind us that it is at a point of transition that we tend to reflect on our past, and of course, the greatest transition of all happens at death. Even if we have no warning that we will die, a moment later, we will find ourselves stopping and considering our past life. That is when we will realize, if perhaps we haven't up until that point, that a good name will live forever, but what we have gained by possibly living an evil life all disappears the instant we die.

The author of Ecclesiastes does indeed have a rigid view of morality, one that is not dependent on circumstances. This is a great strength of this Book. This is how we should live: as if right and wrong are not negotiable. We might want to remember that God values what we have done in this life. Our goal shouldn't be to get some sort of benefit, some payment for living a good life. Our entire motivation should be knowing that when God approves of our lives, we have succeeded in living as best as we can like Christ. Then, our good name will live for all of eternity.