

What's In A Name

Even though your parents gave you a name when you were born, during the years since then you have been giving yourself a name.

Now when people think of your name, they also think of the reputation you have been building.

Having a good name, a good reputation, can lead to many benefits and privileges at home, at school and at work.

A good reputation can greatly improve your chances of success in life.

What can you be doing now that will guarantee you a good name?

Just how important is it to have a good name?

Proverbs 22:1 [NIV] *“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.”*

King Solomon, who wrote most of the Proverbs found in the Christian Bible, our Handbook For Life, was the wisest of all men because of the wisdom given to him by the Creator God.

1 Kings 3:10-12 [NIV] *“The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.”*

Solomon knew from practical experience and observation the value of a good name.

Solomon knew that many advantages and privileges come to the person with a good reputation.

Does a good name come from doing what is right and pleasing in God's sight?

Proverbs 21:21 [NIV] *“He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honour.”*

Righteousness and love are part of the very character of the Creator God.

Proverbs 11:27 [NIV] *“He who seeks good finds goodwill, but evil comes to him who searches for it.”*

When you seek to do good you will find that good things happen to you.

Proverbs 14:9 [NIV] *“Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.”*

The Hebrew word translated “upright” is “yâshâr”, referring to what ought to be done, that which is just and meet, talking about integrity.

Proverbs 20:11 [NIV] *“Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.”*

Whatever your age, if you are sincerely trying to do what is right you will be respected more and more by God and other people.

When your name is mentioned others who know you will remember the good things you have done, and the character you have developed as a result.

What about the young person who does not care about doing what an all-wise God tells them?

Proverbs 12:8 [NIV] *“A man is praised according to his wisdom, but **men with warped minds are despised.**”*

The Hebrew word translated “warped” is “*âvâh*” meaning crooked or perverse.

If this is your attitude towards God’s Word, His Wisdom, then you will be despised by other people and **not** find favour with God.

Proverbs 13:5 [NIV] *“The righteous hate what is false, but **the wicked bring shame and disgrace.**”*

Rebellion or a restless activity of a fallen nature is the meaning of the Hebrew word “*râshâ*” translated wicked in the scripture.

Proverbs 10:7 [NIV] *“The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but **the name of the wicked will rot.**”*

“Rot” is the Hebrew word “*râqab*” meaning to decay like rotting wood that is of no use to anyone.

Realising how important it is to follow the principles God has given you in the Christian Bible, you need to know specific things you can do to build a good name.

If you begin to do these things now, when young, you will start to build the kind of reputation that will stand you in good stead for the rest of your life.

How does the fifth Commandment read?

Exodus 20:12 [NIV] *“**Honour your father and your mother**, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”*

Why should you honour your parents?

Proverbs 10:1 [NIV] *“The proverbs of Solomon: **A wise son brings joy to his father**, but a foolish son grief to his mother.”*

Such an attitude will bring joy to your parents that will gain favour in their eyes.

Proverbs 23:24-25 [NIV] *“The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!”*

When you seek to do what is right in God’s eyes you will be honouring your parents.

Proverbs 15:20 [NIV] *“A wise son brings joy to his father, but **a foolish man despises his mother.**”*

Not applying God’s wisdom shows your parents how you despise them, inspite of all they have sacrificed for your welfare.

What about young people who show disrespect towards their parents?

Proverbs 20:20 [NIV] *“If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.”*

The Hebrew word translated “curses” is “*qâlal*” meaning to make light of, to show contempt or to despise.

Such an attitude of mind will result in a fateful end to your life.

“Pitch darkness”, completely cut off from your Creator God who is light.

Proverbs 17:25 [NIV] *“A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.”*

The total breakdown of family relationships.

Proverbs 19:26 [Living Bible] *“A son who mistreats his father or mother is a public disgrace.”*

Such a person is far from having a good name or reputation.

A wise young person will be striving to honour and respect their parents, following their wise instructions and advice based on long experience, to the best of their ability.

Such an attitude will bring you privileges and opportunities a foolish child will **not** receive.

Such favour does **not** come overnight, it is the end result of your consistent, trustworthy conduct over a period of time.

Just how important is it to be truthful and to think twice before you speak?

Proverbs 12:22 [NIV] *“The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.”*

To lie is abhorrent to our Creator God.

Why?

Titus 1:2 [NIV] *“a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,”*

If God just lied just once we could never trust any promise He has made.

We would be without any assured hope of future life now or after physical death.

Any obedience to God’s commands would be useless.

If you lie just once, no other person could trust anything you said or promised in the future.

Proverbs 17:27-28 [NIV] *“A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.”*

You need to be sure that what you say is truthful otherwise it is better to **not** give an opinion.

Proverbs 15:1, 23 [NIV] *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” ... “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply, and how good is a timely word!”*

What you are being told by these proverbs is to *“put your mind into gear before you open your mouth.”*

A hasty, unconsidered remark, can get you into trouble and will end up seriously hurting your reputation.

Don't always say the first thing that comes into your mind.

It might be better to say it later after thinking about what effect it will have on all who hear what you say, or not even make a comment at all.

Gossip and slander will hurt your reputation in the end.

Avoid even listening to such talk, for just hearing what may **not** be true will influence how you think about that person involved.

Seek to only say positive, encouraging words about others and to others.

Will bragging and boasting about yourself end up getting you into trouble?

Proverbs 27:1-2 [NIV] *“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.”*

Your reputation is **only** valid when it is the result of what others say about you.

Proverbs 20:6 [Living Bible] *“Most people will tell you what loyal friends they are, but are they telling the truth?”*

Proverbs 11:2 [NIV] *“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”*

If you boast about yourself you will end up being exposed as a fraud.

Proverbs 16:5, 18 [NIV] *“The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.” ... “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

Your pride will always end up in disgrace and your reputation will be destroyed.

God and other human beings will honour your humble attitude when you are more concerned about the welfare and reputation of other people.

Pride will always cause you to bring shame and trouble on yourself.

Those who are humble, realise they don't know it all, admit mistakes when they make them and will listen to advice and correction.

Will a diligent and hard working person receive respect from others?

Proverbs 22:29 [NIV] *“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.”*

The quality of your day-to-day work will be what others judge your reputation by.

You need to do your daily work as well and conscientiously as you can with the skills that God has blessed you with.

Such work will be noticed by others and they will desire to employ you.

Proverbs 10:5 [NIV] *“He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.”*

If you are lazy and irresponsible your reputation will be harmed.

Proverbs 10:26 [NIV] *“As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him.”*

Laziness will cause others to avoid employing you in the future.

Proverbs 25:19 [NIV] *“Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.”*

If you do **not** faithfully fulfil what you are asked to do, don't expect to be asked again, for you have seriously damaged your reputation.

What kind of reputation did Jesus Christ have as a young person?

Luke 2:40, 52 [NIV] *“And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.” ... “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.”*

As a teenager Jesus Christ took life very seriously and prepared Himself for His future work.

The way He acted and the words He spoke earned the respect and admiration of the adults who knew Him.

What is the basic reason heroes who have their lives recorded in the Christian Bible, such as Ruth, Daniel, Esther as well as David and Jesus Christ, have such good names?

As young people and then as adults, they worked hard to obey God and treat other people with kindness and respect.

Remember that when your name is mentioned what comes into other people's minds is largely determined by you.

So do your best to make your name and reputation a good one!