

Proverbs 22:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Analysis

This proverb values reputation over riches: 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.' A 'good name' (shem tov—good reputation) surpasses material wealth in value. 'Loving favour' (chen tov—gracious favor, goodwill) similarly exceeds precious metals. The verse establishes priorities: character and reputation matter more than financial wealth. This doesn't denigrate money but places it in proper perspective. Reputation, once destroyed, proves difficult to restore; maintaining integrity preserves one's good name. Ecclesiastes 7:1 similarly states: 'A good name is better than precious ointment.'

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures prized reputation highly. Public disgrace could devastate social standing and economic prospects. Yet Proverbs insists that reputation should be earned through godly character, not pursued through wealth display or social manipulation. The principle remains relevant—integrity and trustworthiness create lasting value beyond financial assets.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. If forced to choose, would you sacrifice wealth to preserve your reputation for integrity and godliness?
2. What specific choices can you make to build and protect a 'good name' characterized by Christ-like character?

Interlinear Text

נִבְנֵת ר	שֵׁם	מִעְשָׁר	כָּב	חַדְּשָׁה
is rather to be chosen	A good name	riches	than great	rather than silver
H977	H8034	H6239	H7227	H3701
בְּזָבֵן וְמִזְבֵּחַ	טָבוֹב:			
and gold	favour	and loving		
H2091	H2580	H2896		

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 7:1 (Good): A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

Luke 10:20 (Parallel theme): Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.