

From Steve Robinson, author of *Covert Cows and Chick-fil-A: How Faith, Cows and Chicken Built an Iconic Brand*

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches; loving favor rather than silver and gold. — Proverbs 22:1

I had certainly come across this verse before I met Truett Cathy, Chick-fil-A's founder. However, as I sat in his office in December 1980 for what turned out to be my last interview before he hired me, I had never seen a businessman prominently display a bible verse on his desk. But there it was... Proverbs 22:1.

I didn't know it at the time, but this was Truett's life verse, one he had been drawn to as a child. It was a bold life principle that, I would come to learn, influenced practically every decision he made. But why? Could it be that he decided that his reputation was, at its core, the most important thing he possessed? And maybe I struck a cord during that interview when I referenced the verse as to what a great brand is... a great reputation people can trust.

Over the course of 30 plus years working along side Truett, I found myself wanting to better understand the real meaning of this verse, and what about it is so counter the traditional business mindset.

I offer some observations I saw 'come to life' in Truett's life, at Chick-fil-A, and in my life as well.

Right off the top:

God is using the writer to tell us that what is truly important and valuable is our name!

Not sales growth, not possessions, not stock value or dividends history, not wealth. Really? Yes, really!

Look around today or in history... who are the men and women we most respect? Are or were they known for wealth, or were they known for virtue, good judgment, courage, respect for all, wisdom, and prudence, putting others or their nation first, love of family and neighbors, a sense of supernatural dependence for leadership, and making right choices? Lincoln, Washington, Churchill, Ten Boom, Graham, Jefferson, King. You get it. None of them were perfect. But they clearly were men and women who put their reputation — their name — ahead of earthly gain. And yet, the world's culture lifts up 'silver and gold' above building and protecting our name; even to the extent that we are often tempted to sacrifice our name for some form of earthy gain... usually riches or power.

So, how do we have a good name? Look at the verse. I have to constantly look at the verse! We CHOOSE... 'a good name is to be chosen'. Life is full of choices... daily, hourly, instantaneously.

We have to be on guard about every choice we make!

How do we do that? I would suggest it is as fundamental as learning to ask ourselves... is this decision going to strengthen my reputation or hurt it? And related, given that this is a biblical challenge from our Heavenly Father, who does our reputation ultimately honor? Me, or Him?

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LIGHTHOUSE

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January 12, 2020

We welcome you to all our services!

Sunday:	10:00 AM	Sunday School
	11:00 AM	Morning Worship
	11:00 AM	Kids Church
Wednesday:	5:30 PM	Fellowship & Devotion

Announcements

Tonight, we are beginning a Life Group for our youth. The Youth will meet, at the church, at 4:50 PM, in order to have time to get to Adult Life Group.

In preparation for next week's Business Meeting, the Board is recommending some changes to our By-Laws. These changes will be presented, for ratification, to our members. There is a sheet of proposed changes located at the back of the switch. This sheet shows the current wording (printed in black), and the proposed change printed in red, & the specific changes are highlighted in yellow.

Tonight: Life Group beginning at 5:00 PM at Wayne & Cathy's home.

January 19: Annual Business Meeting immediately following Morning Service. In the event of inclement weather, we will hold the meeting on January 26.

January 19: No Evening Service.

January 26: No Evening Service.

Don't forget to discuss Sunday School & Kids Church with your children!

This week we will be learning about Joash repairing the Temple!

2 Kings 12:4-15 & 2 Chronicles 24:1-14

Thought of the Week

"If you don't stick to your values when they are being tested, they're not values, they're hobbies."
~ Jon Stewart

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I sincerely believe that Truett figured out this litmus test. I saw him weigh dozens, if not hundreds, of decision options where he chose reputation over sales and/or profits. His reputation and Chick-fil-A's. Examples?

Never open stores on Sunday, tithe the business, thousands of store team member scholarships, free childcare and education for hundreds of foster kids, an unbelievably generous restaurant Operator agreement, empowering those closest to the customers to make decisions, stop borrowing to grow faster, and many more. Choosing NOT to put 'silver and gold' ahead of building his good name and that of his brand.

And what are we promised as a result of making these name-first decisions. God's 'loving favor'.

By putting reputation, and implicitly others, ahead of silver and gold, we will enjoy God's favor.

Well, what is that? What does that 'favor' look like?

Maybe He gives us clues in verses 2-4?

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all. — Proverbs 22:2

We first have a heightened sense of who we are. God's creation, not our own. Maybe we are designed to serve, steward, and worship my Maker! So does God's favor begin with an understanding and embracing of this reality? It must since it is the first thing mentioned after the Proverbs 22:1 principle

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished. — Proverbs 22:3

So, if we choose and pursue a good reputation over riches, God might heighten our sense of wisdom and judgment (prudence)? If nothing else, does this elevation of a good name cause us to slow down and seek God's mind and/or the sound counsel of others, to avoid a decision that will actually hurt or even destroy who we are and represent? In my experience, both personally, and in the leadership circles I worked in, the answer is a resounding 'YES'.

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life. — Proverbs 22:4 (emphasis mine)

Now we see the paradigm-busting nature of our Heavenly Father! As we choose reputation over riches, His way, His wisdom, and His judgment, it forces us to acknowledge utter dependence on (humility) and reverence for (fear of) Him... we acknowledge His Lordship over all that we are, have, and enjoy.

The result... we enjoy "loving favor" with "riches and honor and life".

This is what God has convinced me of. When we put name, or reputation, and His loving favor ahead of chasing riches, the principles and promises embedded in Proverbs 22:1-4 become a reality in our lives... maybe even in the life of our businesses as well. Can I explain it all? No. But as the verses remind us, He is our 'Maker', our God, and we're not. He tells us in Isaiah 55:11 that His Word will not return void.

I believe these verses, in large part, because I saw a man called Truett Cathy believe them and attempt to live them out in very practical, daily ways. And what happened? Proverbs 22:1 became a reality in his life, in the life of Chick-fil-A, and in my life as well. Truett made the simple but hard choices to put God's promises about 'a good name' ahead of pursuing riches. And, well, you know the rest of the story.