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Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go 22: 1-16

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

ADONAI's sovereignty and wealth (22:1-9): The key root (Hebrew: *osher*) occurs as **riches** in **verses 1** and **4**, and as **the rich** (Hebrew: *ashir*) in **verses 2** and **7**. Its antonym **poor** (Hebrew: *rush*) occurs in **verses 2** and **7**, and its synonym **the poor** (Hebrew: *dal*) occurs in **verse 9**. Since the generous in **verse 9** suggests that the metaphor points to the oppressive rich in **verse 7**, most verses in this subset (except **verses 5-6**) contain terms pertaining to **wealth**. This subunit teaches that **ADONAI** pays back virtue and punishes vice. **Isra'el's Sovereign** is mentioned explicitly in **verses 2** and **4** and implicitly by "**blessed**" in **verse 9**. Thus, the subunit aims to sober **the rich**, console **the poor**, warn **the oppressor**, and comfort **the oppressed**.⁴³²

Introduction: a good name is better than wealth (22:1): A good name is more desirable than great riches; graciousness (Hebrew: *chen*) is better than silver or gold (22:1 Hebrew). This **proverb** is in the form of a "**better-than**" parallelism that compares relative values. **Wealth** is indeed a good thing, but something even better is **a good name**. The second colon makes it clear that this reputation is one of **graciousness**. People who show **grace** to others are indeed those who have a wonderful reputation with those with whom they come into contact. **A good name is better than perfumed oil (Ecclesiastes 7:1a)**. It is better to be in a healthy relationship with other people than it is to have an abundance of impersonal material possessions. If one has to choose between the two, and that is not always the case, it is better to choose the things that bring us into a more intimate relationship with other people.

ADONAI's sovereignty over wealth and human accountability (22:2-4):

The rich and poor have this in common - ADONAI made them both (22:2 CJB). On the surface, those who are rich and those who are poor have plenty of differences. In most societies, ancient Isra'el as well as modern, the two keep a healthy distance between themselves. Even in **Proverbs**, the two social classes are discussed separately, and, all things being equal, **the wise** devise living strategies that will bring them material blessings, while **the poor** often, but not always (**13:23**), are **poor** because of **poor** life choices. However, this **proverb** reminds us all, probably especially **the rich**, that the poor are human beings, formed by the same **Creator**. This observation should lead **the rich** to avoid oppressing those who have less than they do.

A prudent (1:4a) person foresees danger and takes precautions; the simpleminded goes blindly ahead and suffers the consequences (22:3 NLT). This is an observation on a basic principle of living that separates **the wise** (here **prudent**) from **the foolish** (here **simpleminded**). While one recoils from **evil** and its possibility, the other goes out of his way to get involved with **evil**. In **Proverbs 7**, we get a picture of **a simple-minded man** who, seeing **the promiscuous woman**, does not run like **Joseph** from **Potiphar's wife** (see the commentary on **Genesis**, **to see link click Ji - Potiphar's Wife said: Come to Bed with Me! But Joseph Ran**), but rather goes to **her** house (see **Bi - Avoid the Seductress**) and would pay dearly for **his** sin. See the virtually identical **proverb** in **27:12**; also see **14:15** and **18**.⁴³³

The reward for humility is the fear of ADONAI, along with wealth, honor, and life (22:4 CJB). **The fear of ADONAI** is not the spirit of our times. Self-esteem is the spirit of our times. Now, the Bible is not saying there is no place for a sense of personal growth. But that doesn't come first. **The fear of ADONAI is the beginning of wisdom (1:1-7).** **He** comes first, not self, but **Messiah**. **He** is our most urgent need and the key to our future. That is what the Bible is saying, and for us, that is an adjustment.⁴³⁴ Those who **fear ADONAI**, and thus know their place in the world, are by definition **humbled**. They know they are not the center of the universe. **The proverb** describes the rewards to those who are truly **wise** as **wealth, honor, and life**. As always, it is important to note that **proverbs** are not promises; **they** are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

Center: Educating youth the right way (22:5-6): Corrupt people walk a thorny, treacherous path; whoever values life will avoid it (22:5 NLT). The idea behind this proverb is fairly clear. It is simply that the lives (here

represented by **the path**) of **corrupt people** are overcome with all kinds of obstacles. Therefore, those who care about the course of their lives should stay far away from those people. This proverb fits in with those that encourage people to associate only with **the wise** and avoid **the foolish**.⁴³⁵



Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (22:6 Hebrew). Your few years with your **children** are a life-shaping opportunity. It might feel like, right now, as though these high-commitment, **child**-rearing years will never end. But they will, and soon. Right now is your moment for lifelong impact. There is more at stake for your children than getting into the best schools and best sports team or the best jobs. Your child has an eternal destiny. **ADONAI** has called you to train up your **child** to go to heaven. That is ultimately **the way he should go**. The question for you is this: How do you help **him** get there?

The word translated **train up** means *dedicate*. Dedicate your **child** to **Messiah**. Do not raise your child for a **worldly** dream. Warn your **child** against **the world (First John 2:15-16)**. It is an easy way to hell. Your parental role is to model a love for **Yeshua**. The Hebrew word translated **train up** is related to an Arabic verb that is used of rubbing the palate of a newborn child with a date mixture, to get the child to suck. It means to accustom a **child** to a test and to motivate a **child** to take it in. And the best way for you to influence your **child** in that way is for you to be *dedicated* to **Messiah** yourself. **Children** can sense hypocrisy immediately. **They** also know sincerity. If you want your **children** to be passionate for **Messiah**, let them see that passion in you, so your **child** tastes how good it is and wants more.⁴³⁶

It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true

principles, all other things being equal. **Solomon** recognized that there are strategic opportunities for positive training and instruction during the childhood years. The lessons learned during these formative years will serve as guideposts for later adult life.

ADONAI punishes the rich and rewards the generous (22:7-9): Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower becomes a slave to the lender (22:7 NLT). Financial decisions have the power to preserve life or enslave. The contrast between the two is clearly displayed in **Proverbs**. Those who borrow money become enslaved to those who have lent it to them. Yet, those who save for hard times may preserve their lives. The difference between the two outcomes depends on our attitudes toward possessions and money. That is not to say that it's wrong under any and all circumstances to take on debt. Loans for the purchase of homes and vehicles are often necessary. However, the person who gets a mortgage or a car loan should be aware of the ramifications of the debt, and should pay it off as quickly as possible. In addition, he should be prepared for difficulties and have a plan to be able to continue paying the debt as much as possible in hard times.

The other side of the financial coin is saving. In **27:23-27** there is a short wisdom poem that presents saving from the point of view of a farmer. **Wealth doesn't last forever (27:24).** Saving is not only a necessary protection for those of modest means, but even for those who are **wealthy**. To summarize, this saving principle says, "When your income runs out, you can live on your savings." Financial wisdom is not in having more than we can afford now (borrowing), but in having less than we can afford now, so that we will have extra later when we need it. In other words, live for the future and not for the present.⁴³⁷

Those who plant injustice will harvest disaster, and their reign of terror will come to an end (22:8 NLT). This **proverb** expresses the simple idea of the "Retribution Principle." **The wicked are trapped by their own wicked desires (11:5b and 11:6b Hebrew).** **Dishonest**, cruel, or immoral deeds have a way of being found out and of bringing trouble on heads of **those** who practice **them**. This is the law of natural consequences, but it goes much deeper. **Justice** is a part of human nature, built into us by our **Creator**. As **wisdom** was the first of **God's** great words and built into the fabric of the universe (see **BI - Wisdom's Existence before Creation**), we shouldn't be surprised by the "Retribution Principle." The principle of reward and

punishment is fundamental to existence in this universe. We are moral beings made in the image of **God** who is **just**. However, understood as a general principle and not as a guarantee, one can recognize the truth of this “live by the sword, die by the sword” principle (**Matthew 26:52**). Indeed, in light of the B’rit Chadashah’s fuller teaching about the fate of **the righteous** and **the wicked** in the afterlife, it may be correct to speak of this as an “ultimately true principle.”

He who is generous is blessed, because he shares his food with the poor (22:9 CJB). This proverb observes that those who are generous will be blessed. Thus, it fits in with a broad teaching in the book that encourages generosity (**11:24, 29:7** and **14**). This **proverb** does not specify the nature of the blessing or even who will do the blessing. In terms of the latter, we may be right to understand that this is an unspoken reference to **God**. It seems less likely that it is a reference to the thanks of **the poor**, who have not even been named yet. In terms of the latter, other **proverbs** specify that **the blessing** may even include material prosperity that rebounds on the giver (**28:27**).⁴³⁸

Wealth and moral instruction (22:10-16): The second subunit consists of three **proverb** pairs: an introduction regarding **the king’s friends (verses 10-11)**, a body containing warnings against the deceptive speech of **the lazybones** and of **the adulterous wife (verses 12-14)**, and a conclusion pertaining to **wealth** and moral instruction (**verses 15-16**). **Verse 12** functions as a janus between the introduction and the body. The conclusion contrasts **the one who gets ahead by oppressing the poor** and **showering gifts on the rich (verse 16)** with **ADONAI’s blessing of the generous, the one who shares his food with the poor (verse 9)**.

The subunit’s introduction indirectly motivates the young men to accept the parent’s teaching by commanding rulers to evict mockers and by asserting that the pure and understanding have **the king** for a friend. **Verse 12** links the introduction with the warnings against easy money and easy sex by asserting that **ADONAI** always protects the moral order upheld by the ideal **king (verse 12a)** by frustrating **treacherous words (verse 12b)** such as those of **the lazy person (verse 13)** and **the adulterous wife (verse 14)**. The subunit is drawn to a close by implicitly instructing **the father** to **drive foolishness**, such as **laziness** and **promiscuity**, from **the son’s** sin nature by **the rod of discipline**.

Introduction: the king’s friends (22:10-11): This first **proverb** compares the

mocker, whom **the king** throws out, with **the pure of heart** and **the gracious** whom **he** welcomes. **Throw out the mocker, and fighting goes too; quarrels and insults will disappear (22:10 NLT)**. **Mockers** are those who pick fights. Thus, the solution to a conflict may be to get rid of **the troublemaker**. In other words, this **proverb** is saying that it is often not the situation but rather the people involved in a situation who cause the problem. Although **verse 10** is probably addressed to **the king**, it concerns the young men who want **the king's friendship**. **Whoever loves a pure heart and gracious speech will have the king as a friend (22:11 NLT)**. **The king** evicts **mockers** because **they** disrupt **the kingdom's** peace, but welcomes **the pure of heart** because **they** promote peace.

Janus (22:12): **The eyes of ADONAI protect those with knowledge, but He frustrates the treacherous words of the unfaithful (22:12 Hebrew)**. As elsewhere in **Proverbs**, this verse functions as a janus, named after the Roman god of endings and beginnings, symbolized by having two faces – one looking back toward the past and one looking forward toward the future. Looking back, by supporting **His king, ADONAI protects knowledge (verse 12a)**. At the same time, by asserting that **He throws out the mocker** with **his treacherous words (verse 12b)**, it provides a transition to **the treacherous** words of **the lazy man** and **adulterous woman**.

Body: ADONAI upholds truth and subverts treacherous words (22:13-14): The second **proverb** pair of the subunit illustrate two kinds of **words** by **the treacherous**, namely, **the lazybones** (see **Be - Don't be Lazy**) and **the harlot**. By **his** refusal to work, **the lazy man** undermines **his righteousness (10:4-5)**. **He says, "There's a lion outside! I'll be killed if I go out into the street" (22:13 CJB)**. By absurdly claiming that there is **a lion in the street** that will **kill him, he** excuses **himself** from leaving **his** mother's basement and having to go out into the world, stand on **his** own two feet, and work for a living. **His** life and that of the community are not in danger from **his** phantom **lion in the streets**, but from **his lazy lifestyle**.⁴³⁹ **The mouth of an adulterous woman is a deep pit; the man who is under ADONAI's wrath falls into it (22:14 CJB)**. **The woman's mouth** is particularly attractive to young men, not simply because of **her** kisses, but even more because of the flattery that appeals to **their** vanity (**5:3, 6:24, and 7:5**). But though attractive on the surface, **her mouth** is a source of great danger, into those who succumb to temptation will fall. Here, the young men are not described as **fools**, but those who suffer **the wrath of Ha'Shem**.⁴⁴⁰

Conclusion: moral instruction and wealth (22:15-16): Foolishness fills the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away (22:15 Hebrew). Let's be honest about the word **folly, it** means *the willful refusal to make moral choices*. This folly is your **child's** natural heart that doesn't want to grow up and enter adulthood with its moral demands. That **foolishness** is deep within a **child's heart**. But in our world today we no longer object to it. It used to be that boys became men by the age of eighteen to twenty-one. But today we have a new understanding of the transition from boyhood to manhood, it is a prolonged adolescence. More men in their twenties and thirties are still living with their parents. These "men" are still boys. They don't know what they want, they don't make any money playing video games in their parent's basement, thus they don't buy their own house. They don't know what they believe and they don't contribute to society. But **ADONAI** calls boys into adulthood, maybe even before they feel ready:

Joshua was Moshe's assistant from his youth (**Numbers 11:28**).

God called **Samuel** into the ministry when was only a boy (**First Samuel 3**).

Josiah, the reformed king, was eight years old when he began to rule (**2 Kings 22-23**).

Dani'el was a young man when he stood up to Babylonian culture (**Dani'el 1**).

Timothy was young enough to be called my child by **Paul** but was entrusted with the responsibility to lead the church into the post-apostolic era (**First Timothy 4:12** and **Second Timothy 2:1**).

John Quincy Adams was appointed by Congress as a diplomatic secretary to the Court of Catherine the Great of Russia when he was only fourteen years old. A year later he traveled unaccompanied for six months from Saint Petersburg to Paris, stopping along the way in Stockholm to negotiate a trade agreement between America and Sweden.

David Farragut went to sea at the age of ten, fought in the War of 1812 at the age of eleven, and by twelve rose to the rank of captain and commanded a captured British ship.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached his first sermon at the age of fifteen, pastored

a church at sixteen, and at nineteen was preaching to crowds of 5,000 people in London.

Our **children** have immaturity in **their** hearts, but **they** also have the potential of greatness in **Messiah**. We need to help **them** out of immaturity and into greatness with **the rod of discipline**. It's hard to read the Bible and get the impression that **children** should never be spanked. You have to figure out how it works best in your own home; some **children** need only a stare to melt their hearts. But every **child** needs punishments and rewards, that help **them** grow up and become godly men and women.⁴⁴¹

A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showing-off by bribing the rich, likely with the intention of getting more in return, **will end in poverty (22:16 NLT)**. The unit's key word **rich** (Hebrew: *ashir*), here, serves as a bookend with **22:1**. And the catchword **poor** (Hebrew: *dal*) binds this conclusion of the second subunit with that of the first in **22:9**.⁴⁴² The two strategies above will fail. After all, if someone tries to multiply their **riches** on the backs of **the poor**, it's like trying to squeeze water from a rock. The right way to live is to give **generously to the poor**; the one who does that will get a good return for their money (**28:27**). However, **the one oppressing the poor** and **the one bribing the rich will** not only **end up in poverty**, but will lose **their** place at **Abraham's side in paradise** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Hx - The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**). This unit makes it very clear that the paradoxical outcome of **the oppressor** and **the briber** is due to the sovereignty of **ADONAI**.

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for how wisely **You** train **Your children**. Thank **You** for being the perfect parent in all ways – in lovingkindness and in discipline. **My son, do not take lightly the discipline of Adonai or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because Adonai disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts (Hebrews 12:5b-6)**. Please guide parents who love you to **discipline their children** wisely, as **You discipline**, so that **righteousness** is produced. **Now all discipline seems painful at the moment – not joyful. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:11)**. Thank **You** for always being with your children so they can call on you for wisdom how to teach/train up their children. In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*