

Deuteronomy 17:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

Analysis

That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren—The king's greatest danger: pride (לָבָא, levav, heart lifted up). Daily Torah reading prevents this by reminding him he's a **brother** (אָח, ach)—a fellow covenant member, not a demigod. Solomon ignored this, **his wives turned away his heart after other gods** (1 Kings 11:4), leading to kingdom division.

That he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left—The narrow path (Matthew 7:14). James warns leaders face **the greater condemnation** (James 3:1). Peter commands elders: **Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock** (1 Peter 5:3). Leadership doesn't exempt from obedience but intensifies accountability. **To the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children**—obedience ensures dynastic stability. Disobedience destroys legacies (Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh).

Historical Context

Saul exemplified the lifted-up heart (1 Samuel 15:17-23), presuming to alter God's commands. David, though flawed, remained 'a man after God's own heart' (Acts

13:22) through repentance (Psalm 51). Solomon's drift from Torah resulted in Israel's permanent division (1 Kings 11-12).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What leadership positions (work, ministry, family) tempt you toward pride and exempting yourself from standards you expect others to follow?
2. How does viewing yourself as a 'brother' (fellow servant) rather than 'above' others shape your leadership?
3. What legacy are you building—faithfulness that 'prolongs days' for your spiritual children, or disobedience that destroys what you've built?

Interlinear Text

וּלְבִלְתִּי H1115	רוֹם be not lifted up H7311	לִבּוֹ That his heart H3824	מֵאֲדָיו above his brethren H251	וּלְבִלְתִּי H1115
ס וּר and that he turn not aside H5493	מִן H4480	הַמִּצְוָה from the commandment H4687	יָמֵי יוֹן to the right hand H3225	
וּשְׁמִי אֵל or to the left H8040	לְמַעַן H4616	יִאָּרְךָ יוֹם to the end that he may prolong H748	יָמֵי יוֹם his days H3117	עַל H5921
מִמַּלְכוּתוֹ in his kingdom H4467	ה וְאֵם H1931	וּבְנֵי יוֹם he and his children H1121	בְּקֶרֶב in the midst H7130	יִשְׂרָאֵל: of Israel H3478

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 5:32 (Parallel theme): Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

1 Kings 15:5 (Parallel theme): Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Isaiah 2:12 (Parallel theme): For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

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