

Deuteronomy 22:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself.

Analysis

Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture—The Hebrew gedilim (fringes/tassels) appears only here; the parallel in Numbers 15:37-41 uses tzitzit. These tassels, attached to garment corners, served as visual reminders of God's commandments. Numbers 15:39 explains: 'that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes.'

The tassels symbolized covenant obedience and identity as God's people. Each time an Israelite saw or touched them, he remembered his calling to holiness. Jesus wore these (Matthew 9:20; 14:36), affirming His observance of the law. The Pharisees made theirs ostentatiously large as displays of piety (Matthew 23:5), perverting the symbol's purpose. The principle: build tangible reminders of God's word into daily life to maintain focus on obedience. For Christians, this might be Scripture memorization, displayed verses, or liturgical practices that anchor faith to God's truth.

Historical Context

This command was given to Israel entering Canaan, where they would face constant temptation toward Canaanite practices. The visible tassels created a tangible, daily reminder of covenant identity. Archaeological findings include garments with corner tassels from the Second Temple period. Rabbinic tradition elaborated detailed regulations for tzitzit construction and wearing. Jesus's rebuke

of Pharisees for enlarged tassels (Matthew 23:5) shows how a good practice can be corrupted into proud display rather than humble remembrance.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What tangible practices or symbols help you maintain daily awareness of God's word and your covenant identity in Christ?
2. How can you distinguish between legitimate reminders that focus your heart on God versus outward religious displays that feed pride?

Interlinear Text

גְּדִל יָם	תַּעֲשֶׂה	עַל לָךְ	אַרְבַּע	כִּנֹּף וְזֵית	בְּסוּתְךָ
thee fringes	Thou shalt make	H0	H5921	upon the four	quarters
H1434	H6213		H702	H3671	H3682
אֶשׂ ר	תִּכְסֶּה	בָּהּ:			
H834	wherewith thou coverest	H0			
	H3680				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 23:5 (Parallel theme): But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,