

Deuteronomy 22:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

Analysis

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again. Beyond returning lost property, this law requires helping neighbors in immediate distress. Seeing animals fallen under burdens demands active assistance, not indifference.

The repetition hide thyself again condemns willful blindness. God knows the human tendency to avoid inconvenient situations by pretending not to notice them. Covenant love requires engagement, not studied indifference.

The emphatic surely help him makes assistance mandatory, not optional. This is commanded neighborly love, not encouraged charity. Believers must actively aid those struggling under burdens, even at personal inconvenience.

Paul applies this principle spiritually - Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Physical burden-bearing illustrates spiritual responsibility to help struggling believers.

Historical Context

Fallen animals carrying loads were common on ancient roads. Without assistance, animals could die from exhaustion or injury, and valuable cargo could be lost or damaged.

This law required cooperation between people who might otherwise be indifferent or even hostile, promoting community cohesion.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does required assistance to struggling neighbors teach about covenant love?
2. How does prohibition against hiding yourself address human tendency to avoid inconvenience?
3. Why is helping those under burdens commanded rather than merely encouraged?
4. How does Paul apply this principle spiritually to bearing believers' burdens?
5. What does physical burden-bearing teach about spiritual responsibility to help struggling brothers?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	תִּרְאֶה	אֶת	חֵם	וֹר	אָחִי	יְ	אִו	שׁוֹרוֹ	נָפַל יָם
H3808	Thou shalt not see	H853	ass	H2543	thy brother's	H251	H176	or his ox	fall down
	H7200							H7794	H5307

בְּדֶרֶךְ	וְהִתְעַלְמָתָּ	מִהֶם	תִּקַּח יָם
by the way	and hide	H1992	help him to lift them up again
H1870	H5956		H6965

תִּקַּח יָם	עִמּוֹ:
help him to lift them up again	H5973
H6965	

Additional Cross-References

Romans 15:1 (Parallel theme): We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Matthew 5:44 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

2 Corinthians 12:15 (Parallel theme): And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org