

Job 11:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;

Analysis

Zophar counsels: 'If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him.' The verb *kun* (קַנֵּ, prepare) means to establish, make ready, or set in order. *Paras* (פָּרַשׁ, stretch out) describes spreading hands in prayer—a posture of supplication. Zophar assumes Job hasn't properly repented, urging preparation of heart and prayer. The counsel is good in appropriate contexts but misapplied here—Job has already prayed and maintained integrity. Zophar's error demonstrates pastoral malpractice: giving correct general advice inappropriate for specific situations.

Historical Context

Stretching hands toward heaven was common ancient prayer posture, seen throughout Scripture (Exodus 9:29, 1 Kings 8:22, Psalm 88:9). Zophar's counsel reflects genuine piety but wrong diagnosis. He cannot accept that Job's suffering might not require repentance from specific sin. The advice would comfort someone convicted of sin but torments an innocent sufferer.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do we avoid Zophar's error of offering correct general counsel that doesn't fit specific situations?
2. What does this verse teach about the importance of proper diagnosis before prescribing spiritual remedies?

Interlinear Text

כְּפִיבָּן: אַל יְאַט הָאָם אַתָּה בְּכִינָה וְתַּעֲשֵׂה בְּלִבְךָ וְפִרְשָׁתָה אַל יְאַט הָאָם אַל יְאַט הָאָם
H518 H859 If thou prepare thine heart and stretch out thine hands
H3559 H3820 H6566 H413 H3709

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 88:9 (Parallel theme): Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

Psalms 143:6 (Parallel theme): I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

Psalms 78:8 (Parallel theme): And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

1 Samuel 7:3 (Parallel theme): And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.