

Job 31:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

Analysis

Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me (אָרַצְתִּי כָּבֵד וּבָזְמַשְׁפָחוֹת יְחִתֵּנִי)—aratz (עָרֵץ) means to fear or dread, hamon (חָמָן) means multitude or crowd, buz (בָּז) means contempt or scorn, and chatat (חַטָּאת) means to terrify or dismay. **That I kept silence, and went not out of the door** (לֹא-אָזַע פֶּתַח, va'edom lo-etse fatach)—damam (דָּמָם) means to be silent or still, and petach (פֶּתַח) means door or entrance.

Job denies being silenced by fear of public opinion. He claims he didn't hide transgressions (v. 33) because of fear of social consequences (v. 34). This demonstrates moral courage—doing right regardless of public approval. Proverbs 29:25 warns that fear of man brings a snare, but trusting the Lord brings safety. Jesus commanded fearing God who can destroy both soul and body rather than fearing those who can only kill the body (Matthew 10:28). From a Reformed perspective, Job's freedom from fear of man demonstrates proper fear of God. When we fear God supremely, human opinion loses its power. Job's transparency despite potential social consequences reveals authentic righteousness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture was deeply honor/shame oriented. Public reputation determined social standing and economic opportunity. Families could ostracize members who brought shame. Job's claim that he didn't hide sin from fear of social

consequences demonstrates remarkable courage. His willingness to face public judgment rather than conceal wrongdoing reflects integrity. This countered cultural norms where maintaining honor sometimes trumped truth.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does Job's freedom from fear of public opinion challenge our tendency to manage our reputation?
2. What does Job's willingness to face social consequences teach about the relationship between fearing God and fearing man?
3. How can we cultivate the moral courage to do right regardless of how others might respond?

Interlinear Text

וְיִחְתַּבֵּל כִּי מִשְׁפָּחָה זֹת	וּבָזֵב כִּי הַמִּלְאָךְ אֶעָרֶז	וְיִתְּבַּרְאֶז כִּי	וְיִתְּבַּרְאֶז כִּי
terrify families of	contempt did or great a	multitude I	fear I
H2865 H4940	H937 H7227	H1995 H6206	H3588

פָּתַח:	אַצְּאֵל	לֹא	מִן־אֶת־	me that I kept silence	H1826
of the door	H6607	H3318	H3808	and went not out	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:2 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

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