

Proverbs 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

Analysis

This verse identifies wisdom's intended recipients: the simple (peti - naive, easily seduced) who need prudence (ormah - shrewdness, discretion), and youth who need knowledge and discretion. The 'simple' aren't morally corrupt but lack experience and discernment, making them vulnerable to folly. Wisdom literature aims to equip the inexperienced with practical godliness before life's hard lessons teach through painful consequences. This reflects God's gracious provision of instruction preventing needless suffering.

Historical Context

Reflects ancient pedagogical context where wisdom teaching prepared young men for adult responsibilities. The instruction served as proactive character formation, anticipating challenges of adult life in covenant community.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What areas of life reveal your naivete requiring wisdom's instruction?
2. How are you proactively seeking wisdom before trials force reactive learning?

Interlinear Text

לֵית	לְפֶתְאִי	עֲרֻמָּה	לְנָעַר	יָדַעַת	וּמִזְמָה:
To give	to the simple	subtily	to the young man	knowledge	and discretion
H5414	H6612	H6195	H5288	H1847	H4209

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 8:5 (Parallel theme): O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

Proverbs 8:17 (Parallel theme): I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Psalms 119:9 (Parallel theme): Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Psalms 119:130 (Parallel theme): The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Proverbs 8:12 (Parallel theme): I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Proverbs 8:32 (Parallel theme): Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.