

Proverbs 10:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

Analysis

The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom. Righteous speech provides spiritual nourishment benefiting many; fools perish from lack of understanding. The verb 'feed' (ra'ah - shepherd, pasture) suggests righteous persons pastor others through godly speech. In contrast, fools don't merely lack wisdom but die for want of it - ignorance is fatal. This establishes both the value of godly teaching and the danger of remaining foolish.

Historical Context

Reflects covenant community where wise elders taught younger generations, providing spiritual sustenance through instruction. Lack of such teaching left people vulnerable to spiritual and practical ruin.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How is your speech feeding others spiritually versus leaving them malnourished?

2. What wisdom do you currently lack that could prove fatal if not acquired?

Interlinear Text

לְבָנָה בְּחִסּוּר אֲוִילִים כַּבְּיִם יְרֻעָה צְדִיקָה שְׁפִיתָה
The lips of the righteous feed many but fools for want of wisdom
H8193 H6662 H7462 H7227 H191 H2638 H3820

ימوتה:
die
H4191

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 4:6 (Parallel theme): My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Proverbs 17:16 (Parallel theme): Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?

Proverbs 1:29 (Parallel theme): For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Matthew 13:19 (Parallel theme): When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Proverbs 15:4 (Parallel theme): A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Job 23:12 (Parallel theme): Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Proverbs 5:12 (Parallel theme): And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

Proverbs 5:23 (Parallel theme): He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Proverbs 1:31 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

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