

Proverbs 12:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

Analysis

This proverb sharply contrasts responses to correction: 'Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.' The one who loves instruction (musar—discipline, correction, training) demonstrates love for knowledge because they recognize that correction leads to understanding. The parallel phrase uses strong language: hating reproof (tokakhah—rebuke, correction) makes one 'brutish' (ba'ar—stupid, unreasoning like an animal). The metaphor is striking—refusing correction reduces humans to beast-like irrationality. Animals cannot receive verbal correction or learn from reproof; humans can, and choosing not to is dehumanizing. This verse challenges pride that resists criticism and calls for teachability.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite pedagogy involved firm correction, including physical discipline (Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14). While modern contexts differ, the underlying principle remains: growth requires receiving correction. Jewish and Christian traditions both emphasize the importance of spiritual direction, accountability, and mutual correction within community. Those who isolate themselves from correction stagnate spiritually.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you typically respond to correction or criticism—with defensive resistance or teachable receptivity?
2. Who in your life has permission to offer you reproof, and do you genuinely value their correction as a path to wisdom?

Interlinear Text

אֵהָב	מִוְסָר	אֵהָב	דָּעַת	וְשׂוֹנֵא	תוֹכַחַת
Whoso loveth	instruction	Whoso loveth	knowledge	but he that hateth	reproof
H157	H4148	H157	H1847	H8130	H8433
בְּעֵר:					
is brutish					
H1198					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 15:10 (Parallel theme): Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.

Psalms 32:9 (Parallel theme): Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Psalms 92:6 (Parallel theme): A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

Proverbs 18:1 (Parallel theme): Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 (Love): And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

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

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

Isaiah 1:3 (Parallel theme): The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Psalms 119:27 (Parallel theme): Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

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