

Proverbs 12:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.

Analysis

This verse declares God's moral evaluation of speech: 'Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.' The strong term 'abomination' (to'evah) denotes something morally repulsive to God, often used for covenant violations and idolatry. Lying is not merely prohibited but abhorred by God who is truth Himself (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). The contrast presents those who 'deal truly' (literally 'doers of faithfulness/truth') as God's 'delight' (ratson—pleasure, favor, acceptance). God takes pleasure in truthful people because they reflect His character. This grounds ethics in theology—truthfulness matters because God is truth, and lying offends His nature.

Historical Context

In ancient covenant contexts, truthfulness was essential for community trust and commercial integrity. False witnesses, dishonest scales, and deceptive contracts undermined social order. The ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16), and the law prescribed penalties for false testimony (Deuteronomy 19:16-21). Proverbs grounds this legal requirement in God's character—He abhors lying because it violates who He is.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what subtle ways are you tempted to shade the truth, exaggerate, or deceive through omission rather than outright lies?
2. How does understanding that lying is an abomination to the LORD (not merely a practical inconvenience) affect your commitment to truthfulness?

Interlinear Text

אַמְוֹן הָנֶעֱשֶׂת שְׁפָתִי לְקַר שׁוֹעֵב תְּהִלָּה הַיְהָה ! שׁוֹעֵב תְּהִלָּה אַמְוֹן הָנֶעֱשֶׂת שְׁפָתִי לְקַר שׁוֹעֵב תְּהִלָּה הַיְהָה !

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are his delight

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Additional Cross-References

Psalms 5:6 (References Lord): Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Revelation 22:15 (Parallel theme): For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Proverbs 11:20 (Light): They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

Jeremiah 9:24 (Light): But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 9:15 (Parallel theme): The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

Proverbs 11:1 (Light): A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

Proverbs 15:8 (Light): The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Ezekiel 13:22 (Parallel theme): Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:

Ezekiel 13:19 (Parallel theme): And will ye pollute me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lies?

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