

Proverbs 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

Analysis

This proverb contrasts the righteous and wicked through their relationship with truth. "A righteous man hateth lying" declares moral clarity. Tsaddiq yisna devar-sheqer (צַדִּיק יִשְׁנָא דְּבָר־שְׁקָר), the righteous hates a lying word). Sane (שְׁנָא, hate) is strong—not mere disapproval but active aversion. The righteous don't just avoid lies; they hate them because lies violate God's character who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

"But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame" describes the wicked's trajectory. Rasha yavish veyachpir (רָשָׁע יָבֵשׁ וַיָּחֲפֵר), the wicked causes stench and brings shame). Ba'ash (בָּאָשׁ) means to stink, become odious, be abhorred. The wicked's character and conduct produce moral revulsion. They yachpir (וַיָּחֲפֵר, bring shame, disgrace, reproach) upon themselves.

The proverb establishes lying as the distinguishing mark. The righteous align with truth because they worship the God of truth. The wicked embrace lies because their father is the devil, the father of lies (John 8:44). Their dishonesty makes them morally repugnant and ultimately brings public shame. Proverbs 6:16-17 lists lying tongue among seven abominations to God. Jesus is the Truth incarnate (John 14:6); His followers walk in truth (3 John 1:4). The Spirit of truth guides believers into all truth (John 16:13), enabling them to hate lies and love righteousness.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's legal system depended on truthful testimony. The ninth commandment prohibited false witness (Exodus 20:16), and Mosaic Law prescribed severe penalties for perjury. Lying witnesses could receive the punishment they sought to inflict on others (Deuteronomy 19:18-19). Truth upheld justice and community trust, while lies corrupted both. The righteous, committed to covenant faithfulness, hated lies that violated God's character and damaged shalom.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Do you merely avoid lying, or do you actively hate it as violating God's character?
2. In what subtle ways might you tolerate or excuse dishonesty rather than hating all forms of deception?
3. How does Jesus as the Truth incarnate (John 14:6) provide both the standard and the power for truthful living?

Interlinear Text

וְבָא יְשָׁעָה בְּשָׁעָה אֶל־שְׁמַנְיָה אֶל־קָרְבָּן דְּבָרָה
lying H8267 man hateth H8130 A righteous H6662 but a wicked H7563 man is loathsome H887

וְנִתְפִּיר:

and cometh to shame

H2659

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 3:9 (Parallel theme): Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Ephesians 4:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Psalms 119:163 (Parallel theme): I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.

Proverbs 3:35 (Parallel theme): The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Ezekiel 20:43 (Evil): And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

Ezekiel 36:31 (Evil): Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.

Revelation 21:8 (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Proverbs 6:17 (Parallel theme): A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Proverbs 30:8 (Parallel theme): Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

Zechariah 11:8 (Parallel theme): Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.