

Proverbs 14:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.

Analysis

This proverb contrasts gullibility with prudence. "The simple believeth every word" warns against naivety. Peti ya'amin lekhol-davar (פֶּתֶй יָאמִן לְכָל־דָּבָר), the simple believes every word). Peti (פֶּתֶй, simple, naive, gullible) describes the immature or foolish person who aman (אמֵן, believes, trusts) every davar (דָּבָר, word, thing, matter) without discernment.

"But the prudent man looketh well to his going" presents careful wisdom. Vearum yavin le'ashuro (וְעָרֹם יָבִין לְאַשְׁרָוּ), but the prudent discerns his step). Arum (עָרֹם, prudent, shrewd) bin (בִּין, discerns, understands, considers) his ashur (אַשְׁר, step, going). The wise person thinks carefully before proceeding.

The proverb warns against credulity and commends discernment. Acts 17:11 commends Bereans who tested Paul's teaching against Scripture. 1 John 4:1 commands testing spirits. Proverbs 14:18 says "the simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge." In an age of misinformation, believers must exercise biblical discernment—not believing every claim but testing all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Spirit gives discernment (1 Corinthians 2:14-15). Satan deceives through lies (John 8:44). Christians must be wise as serpents while harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16), carefully evaluating teaching and watching their steps.

Historical Context

Ancient world had no fact-checking systems. False prophets, deceitful merchants, and lying witnesses abounded. The simple, lacking discernment, were easily deceived into bad deals, false worship, or unjust testimony. Prudent Israelites tested prophets against Torah (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:21-22) and required multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15). This proverb urged developing critical thinking rooted in God's Word.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. In what areas might you be 'simple,' accepting claims without proper evaluation or biblical discernment?
2. How can you become more prudent in evaluating teaching, media, and cultural messages against Scripture?
3. What does 'looking well to your going' mean practically in your daily decisions and spiritual walk?

Interlinear Text

| | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| תְּבִיבָה | לְכָל | יָאמֵן | פָּתַח |
| The simple | believeth | H3605 | every word |
| H6612 | H539 | | H1697 |
| | | | but the prudent |
| | | | man looketh well |
| | | | H995 |

לְאַשְׁרָה:
to his going

H838

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 14:8 (Parallel theme): The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

Ephesians 5:17 (Parallel theme): Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Proverbs 4:26 (Parallel theme): Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

Proverbs 27:12 (Parallel theme): A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

1 John 4:1 (Faith): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org