

Proverbs 14:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

Analysis

Labor produces profit, while mere talk brings poverty. This work ethic grounds biblical stewardship—faithful industry fulfills creation mandate while lazy excuse-making violates covenant responsibility. The contrast between doing and talking shows wisdom's practical emphasis on fruitful action.

Historical Context

Agricultural society offered clear cause-effect: those who worked hard reaped harvests, while those who only talked about farming starved. The metaphor applied to all endeavors requiring diligent effort.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Where do you substitute talking about goals for actually working toward them?
2. How can you translate spiritual knowledge into concrete obedient action?

Interlinear Text

בְּכָל־עֲמָדָה הַיְהִי־רְמוּת־רַדְבָּר מִדְבָּר אֲנָשָׁן־שְׁפָת־יְמִינָה
H3605 In all labour H1961 there is profit H4195 but the talk H1697 of the lips H389
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למִחְסּוּרָה:

tendeth only to penury

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Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:19 (Parallel theme): He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

Proverbs 12:24 (Parallel theme): The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 (Parallel theme): For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.

John 6:27 (Parallel theme): Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

Proverbs 10:10 (Parallel theme): He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.

1 Timothy 5:13 (Parallel theme): And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

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