

Proverbs 15:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

Analysis

Merry heart produces cheerful countenance, while heartache crushes the spirit. Inner spiritual/emotional state manifests outwardly. Joy is fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), reflecting gospel transformation. Sorrow by worldly concerns versus godly sorrow producing repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10) shows different kinds of heartache.

Historical Context

External appearance revealed internal state in cultures valuing honor and shame. A downcast face signaled social disgrace or personal disaster, while gladness demonstrated divine favor.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does your countenance typically reveal about your heart's condition?
2. How can you cultivate gospel joy even amid difficult circumstances?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------|---------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------|------------|
| לֵב | שֵׂמֶחַ | יֵטֵב | פָּנִים | וּבְעֵצָבָה | לֵב | רוּחַ |
| heart | A merry | maketh a cheerful | countenance | but by sorrow | heart | the spirit |
| H3820 | H8056 | H3190 | H6440 | H6094 | H3820 | H7307 |
| נִכְאָה: | | | | | | |
| is broken | | | | | | |
| H5218 | | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:22 (Spirit): A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Proverbs 18:14 (Spirit): The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Proverbs 12:25 (Parallel theme): Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

John 14:1 (Parallel theme): Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Proverbs 15:15 (Parallel theme): All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (Parallel theme): For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Nehemiah 2:2 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

2 Corinthians 1:12 (Parallel theme): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

2 Corinthians 2:7 (Parallel theme): So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

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