

Proverbs 15:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Analysis

The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain. Derekh atsel kimsukat-chadeq (דֶּרֶךְ עֲצֵל כְּמַשְׁכֵת חָדֵק), the way of the sluggard like a hedge of thorns). The lazy person sees every path obstructed—real or imagined obstacles prevent action. Ve'orach yesharim selulah (וְאַנְחָה יִשְׁרִים סֶלְלָה), but the path of the upright is a highway). Selulah (סֶלְלָה, highway, raised road, clear path) indicates smooth traveling. The righteous find their way cleared. Often obstacles are more in the sluggard's imagination than reality. Diligence overcomes difficulties the lazy person uses as excuses.

Historical Context

Ancient travel faced real hazards—thorns, wild animals, bandits. The sluggard exaggerated these to avoid work (Proverbs 22:13, 26:13: "There is a lion in the way"). The diligent pressed forward, finding paths navigable. Similarly in spiritual life, the lazy find endless excuses for disobedience, while the righteous obey despite difficulties. Christ makes believers' paths straight (Hebrews 12:13).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'hedges of thorns' (excuses, obstacles) are you using to avoid work, growth, or obedience?
2. How can you develop diligence that overcomes real challenges rather than sloth that magnifies them?
3. In what ways does walking uprightly actually make your path smoother in the long run?

Interlinear Text

וְשַׁרְיָם אֵין בַּחַד שְׁלָלָה:
The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns but the way of the righteous

H1870

H6102

H4881

H2312

H734

H3477

שְׁלָלָה:

is made plain

H5549

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 35:8 (Parallel theme): And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

Isaiah 30:21 (Parallel theme): And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Proverbs 22:5 (Parallel theme): Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

Psalms 27:11 (Parallel theme): Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

Proverbs 26:13 (Parallel theme): The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

Proverbs 8:9 (Parallel theme): They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

Proverbs 22:13 (Parallel theme): The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.