

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 אֶתֶּל כִּמְשֻׁקֶּת חֲדָעַק, 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 (וְאֹרַח יֵשָׁרִים סֵלֻלָּה, but the path of the upright is a highway). Selulah (סֵלֻלָּה, 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

Psalms 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

דֶּרֶךְ	עֲצִל	כְּמֶשֶׁ כֶּת	חֲדָק	וְאֵל בַּח	יֵשֶׁר יִם
The way	of the slothful	man is as an hedge	of thorns	but the way	of the righteous
H1870	H6102	H4881	H2312	H734	H3477
סְלֵלָה:					
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.

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