

Proverbs 17:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

Analysis

A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. Techah ge'arah maevin (תַּחַת גְּעָרָה מַעֲבִין, a rebuke descends into the discerning). One reproof deeply impacts the wise. Mehakkot kesil me'ah (מַהַכּוֹת כְּסִיל מֵאָה, more than striking a fool a hundred times). A hundred beatings don't teach fools. The contrast is dramatic—wisdom makes one blow sufficient; folly makes a hundred insufficient. The proverb celebrates teachability versus hardened resistance. Believers should be teachable, learning from gentle correction rather than requiring harsh discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Historical Context

Ancient discipline included corporal punishment. Mosaic Law prescribed flogging (Deuteronomy 25:2-3, limited to 40 lashes). Proverbs frequently mentions physical discipline (13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15). Yet this proverb says wise people don't require beating—verbal reproof suffices. Fools remain unchanged despite severe punishment. The principle: internal receptivity matters more than external severity. Jesus taught disciples gently; they responded with transformation.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Do you learn from one gentle reproof, or do you require many painful experiences before changing?
2. What cultivates teachability that makes gentle correction effective?
3. How does the Holy Spirit's gentle conviction differ from the severe discipline required by hard-hearted resistance?

Interlinear Text

תַּחַת	נָעֲרָה	בְּמִבְּיָן	מִהֶפְזֹת	כֹּסֵל	מֵאָה:
entereth	A reproof	more into a wise man	stripes	into a fool	than an hundred
H5181	H1606	H995	H5221	H3684	H3967

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:19 (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.