

Proverbs 17:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.

Analysis

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. This proverb echoes earlier ones (10:1, 15:20, 17:21), emphasizing parental heartbreak over foolish children. Ka'as le'aviv (קָאָס לְאָבִיו, vexation to his father)—ka'as means grief, sorrow, vexation. Umemer leyoladto (עִמְמֶר לְיֹלָדֹתוֹ, and bitterness to her who bore him)—memer describes bitter sorrow. Mothers who bore children in pain experience bitter grief when those children choose folly. The repeated emphasis shows how seriously Proverbs takes this issue. Parents should teach diligently; children should pursue wisdom to honor parents and God.

Historical Context

Childbearing in ancient times carried significant mortality risk. Mothers invested physical suffering, years of nurture, hopes and dreams into children. When those children pursued folly, it brought bitter grief. Biblical examples include Rebekah's grief over Esau's wives (Genesis 26:34-35), Isaac and Rebekah's heartbreak over Jacob and Esau's conflict, Eli's anguish over his sons (1 Samuel 2:12-17). The proverb urged children toward wisdom that honors sacrificial parental love.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. For children: Does your life bring your parents grief and bitterness or joy and honor?
2. For parents: How can you faithfully teach wisdom while trusting God with ultimate outcomes?
3. How does understanding God as Father grieving over foolish children affect your response to His discipline and wisdom?

Interlinear Text

לִזְלָקָתָה: וְמִנְמָרָה כִּי בְּאָבִיו כְּעֵבֶד
is a grief to his father son A foolish and bitterness to her that bare
H3708 H1 H1121 H3684 H4470 H3205

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:1 (Parallel theme): The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Proverbs 19:13 (Parallel theme): A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.