

Proverbs 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

Analysis

Evildoers 'give heed to false lips' and liars 'give ear to a naughty tongue.' This describes moral affinity: the wicked are attracted to wicked speech. The Hebrew 'awen' (iniquity/false) and 'hawwah' (calamity/mischief) emphasize destructive speech. Reformed theology recognizes that what we listen to reveals and shapes our hearts. Those who love wickedness consume lies; those who love truth reject them. This has implications for media consumption, choice of counselors, and the voices we allow to influence us. We become like what we behold.

Historical Context

False prophets in Israel found receptive audiences among wicked kings and rebellious people (Jeremiah 5:31). The symbiotic relationship between lying speakers and willing listeners perpetuated covenant unfaithfulness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What voices are you listening to—truth-tellers or flatterers, godly counsel or worldly wisdom?
2. How do your media consumption habits reflect or shape your spiritual state?
3. Are you cultivating an appetite for truth that makes you reject falsehood instinctively?

Interlinear Text

עַל	מִזְרָח	יְבָשָׂה	עַל	שְׁפָת	אֵל	אֵל	שְׁקָר	מִזְרָח	עַל
A wicked doer	giveth heed	H5921	lip	to false	and a liar	giveth ear	H5921		
H7489	H7181		H8193	H205	H8267	H238			
לְשָׁוֹן	קֹהֶת:								
tongue	to a naughty								
H3956	H1942								

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:4 (Evil): They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

1 John 4:5 (Parallel theme): They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

Isaiah 30:10 (Parallel theme): Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: