

Proverbs 17:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips
a prince.

Analysis

Excellent speech is unfitting for a fool, and lying lips are 'much more' unsuitable for a prince. The Hebrew 'yether' (excellent/surpassing) describes noble or lofty speech that contradicts foolish character. Even more incongruous are lies from a 'nadiyb' (prince/noble)—one whose position demands truth. This establishes a hierarchy of moral expectations: everyone should speak truthfully, but leaders especially. Reformed theology emphasizes that those in authority bear greater accountability (James 3:1). Leaders who lie betray their calling and bring reproach on their office.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern rulers were expected to embody justice and truth. When kings became liars and tyrants, it undermined the moral order and led to societal collapse, as Israel's history repeatedly demonstrated.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. If you hold positions of leadership, do you maintain higher standards of truthfulness and integrity?
2. How do you respond when leaders lie or use their position to deceive?
3. What is the relationship between character and calling in Christian leadership?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	נֶאֱמַר ה	לֹנֶכָּ ל	שְׁפֹת	יִתְר	א	כִּי	לִנְד יב	שְׁפֹת
H3808	becometh	not a fool	lips	Excellent	H637	H3588	a prince	lips
	H5000	H5036	H8193	H3499			H5081	H8193

שְׁקֵר:
much less do lying
H8267

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 29:12 (Parallel theme): If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.