

Proverbs 19:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Analysis

Parental discipline must be timely—'while there is hope'—suggesting both the child's moldable years and the father's opportunity to intervene before patterns become fixed. The warning 'let not thy soul spare for his crying' addresses parental sentimentality that prioritizes momentary comfort over lasting character. True love disciplines (Hebrews 12:6); false love indulges. The phrase hints at capital punishment for the incorrigibly rebellious son (Deuteronomy 21:18-21), showing how seriously God views parental authority and filial obedience. Faithful discipline, though painful in the moment, aims at the child's ultimate good and God's glory.

Historical Context

Israelite law prescribed severe consequences for persistent rebellion, reflecting how foundational family order was to covenant community health. Modern culture's rejection of discipline has produced widespread familial and social chaos.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Are you disciplining your children consistently and lovingly, or are you being ruled by sentiment?
2. How does God's fatherly discipline of us inform how we discipline our children?

Interlinear Text

אַל הַמִּתְּחִילָה אֶל תִּתְּנַשֵּׁא
Chasten thy son H3588 while there is hope H413 for his crying H408
H3256 H1121 H3426 H8615 H4191

נְפָשְׁךָ תִּשְׁאַל
spare and let not thy soul
H5375 H5315

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:24 (Parallel theme): He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 29:15 (Parallel theme): The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 22:15 (Parallel theme): Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 29:17 (Parallel theme): Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.