

Proverbs 20:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Analysis

Even children reveal their character through actions—whether pure and right. This challenges sentimental views of childhood innocence, affirming that sin manifests early. Yet it also shows the importance of observing children's conduct to guide their formation in wisdom and righteousness.

Historical Context

Ancient pedagogy involved careful observation of children's behavior to discern their bent and guide appropriate training. Proverbs 22:6 counsels training children according to their particular way.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What do your actions reveal about your character, regardless of your professed beliefs?
2. How can you help young people's actions increasingly reflect purity and righteousness?

Interlinear Text

בְּ אֲבָדָה מְעַלְלִי יְדֵי יְדֵי עָרָב אָמֵן אָמֵן
H1571 by his doings is known Even a child be pure H518 H518
H4611 H5234 H5288 H2134

וְשָׁרֵךְ פָּעָלָה

and whether it be right whether his work

H3477

H6467

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 7:16 (Parallel theme): Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Proverbs 21:8 (Parallel theme): The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

Psalms 58:3 (Parallel theme): The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.