

Proverbs 20:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.

Analysis

Success in any enterprise requires counsel—seeking wise advice before acting. 'Established by counsel' indicates that sound plans rest on collective wisdom, not individual impulse. The specific application to warfare emphasizes the need for strategic planning under experienced guidance. War is too consequential to wage impulsively; victory requires careful strategy. This principle extends beyond military matters to all significant decisions. Seeking counsel demonstrates humility, wisdom, and recognition of our limitations. The fool proceeds alone; the wise seek multitudes of advisers (Proverbs 11:14). Ultimately, believers should seek counsel from Scripture, wise believers, and through prayer—submitting all plans to God's revealed will.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings employed counselors and military strategists. Israel's defeats often resulted from ignoring prophetic counsel, while victories came through obedience to divine strategy.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Do you seek wise counsel before major decisions, or do you proceed independently?
2. Who are the godly counselors you trust to speak biblical truth into your life?

Interlinear Text

מִלְחָמָה:	עִשֵּׂה	וְבִמְחֻבָּלָה	תִּכְרֹן	בְּעֵצָה	מִמְּחֻשְׁבּוֹת
Every purpose	by counsel	is established	and with good advice	make	war

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 24:6 (Parallel theme): For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Luke 14:31 (Parallel theme): Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Proverbs 15:22 (Parallel theme): Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Proverbs 11:14 (Parallel theme): Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Judges 20:18 (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah shall go up first.

Judges 20:7 (Parallel theme): Behold, ye are all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.