

Proverbs 21:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

Analysis

The wicked person 'hardeneth his face'—showing stubborn defiance and refusing correction. He presents bold confidence in his wickedness, unashamed and unrepentant. By contrast, the upright person 'directeth his way'—carefully considers his path and adjusts course according to wisdom. This describes opposite responses to moral instruction. The wicked double down on error; the righteous humbly correct. Hardening is both cause and effect of judgment—people harden themselves, and God hardens them further in judgment (Romans 1:24-28). The upright demonstrate teachability and wisdom by examining and directing their steps according to God's will. Repentance and course correction mark genuine faith.

Historical Context

Pharaoh's hardened heart exemplifies this principle. Despite repeated judgments, he refused to humble himself, resulting in increasing hardness and ultimate destruction.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When confronted with sin, do you harden yourself defensively or humbly repent?
2. What evidence of teachability and course correction exists in your life?

Interlinear Text

הִעֲזָה	אִישׁ	רָשָׁע	בְּפָנָיו	אֲשֶׁר	אֵל הַיָּשָׁרִים	
hardeneth	man	A wicked	his face	but as for the upright		
H5810	H376	H7563	H6440	H3477	H1931	H3559
וּבְדֶרֶכָּיו:						
his way						
H1870						

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 11:5 (Evil): The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

Psalms 119:5 (Parallel theme): O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

Psalms 119:59 (Parallel theme): I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

Proverbs 28:14 (Parallel theme): Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Jeremiah 5:3 (Parallel theme): O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

1 Thessalonians 3:11 (Parallel theme): Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

Ezekiel 18:28 (Parallel theme): Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

Haggai 1:7 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

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