

Proverbs 21:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

Analysis

The wicked's 'high look' (Hebrew 'rum ayin'—haughty eyes) and 'proud heart' are their 'plowing'—the Hebrew 'niyr' can mean lamp or plowing/tillage. If the latter, their labor produces only sin. Pride characterizes the wicked's fundamental orientation. Proverbs repeatedly condemns pride (6:17, 16:18). Reformed theology sees pride as the original sin—Satan's 'I will be like the Most High' (Isaiah 14:14) and Adam's grasping for autonomous knowledge. Pride rejects God's authority and exalts self. All the wicked's works flow from this prideful heart and are therefore sinful.

Historical Context

In honor-shame cultures, visible pride (haughty eyes, arrogant posture) signaled covenant unfaithfulness. Israel was called to humble dependence on Yahweh, making pride a fundamental violation of their relationship with God.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life do you exhibit 'high looks' and a 'proud heart'?
2. How does pride infect even seemingly good works, making them sinful?
3. What does biblical humility look like in contrast to the wicked's pride?

Interlinear Text

רֹם לְבָדְבָד עַיִנִים מְפַתֵּח יְמִין
An high look and a proud heart and the plowing of the wicked is sin
H7312 H5869 H7342 H3820 H5215 H7563 H2403

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Proverbs 6:17 (Parallel theme): A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Isaiah 2:17 (Parallel theme): And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Proverbs 8:13 (Evil): The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.