

Proverbs 21:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The way of man is foward and strange: but as for the pure,
his work is right.

Analysis

The guilty man's way is 'foward' (Hebrew 'haphakpak'—twisted, perverse), contrasted with the pure whose work is 'right' (Hebrew 'yashar'—straight, upright). The wicked's path is crooked, characterized by deception and moral distortion. The pure person walks a straight path of integrity. Reformed theology emphasizes the antithesis between regenerate and unregenerate. The unconverted cannot walk righteously; the converted, though still imperfect, walk increasingly in uprightness through sanctification. Our works reveal our spiritual state.

Historical Context

The imagery of straight versus crooked paths was common in ancient wisdom literature. Straight paths represented covenant faithfulness and moral integrity, while crooked paths led to destruction.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Are your paths straight and upright, or crooked and deceptive?

2. How does your work ethic and business practice reveal your spiritual condition?
3. What does progressive sanctification look like in making your ways increasingly straight?

Interlinear Text

פָּנָלָה יְשָׁרָה בְּפַרְכָּפָה כִּי רַבְּדָה אֲשֶׁר דָּרְבָּנָה
is froward The way of man and strange but as for the pure is right his work
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Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 2:15 (Parallel theme): Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

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