

Proverbs 22:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Analysis

This proverb addresses child-rearing: 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' The verse recognizes innate sinfulness—'foolishness' (ivvelet—moral folly, not mere childish ignorance) is 'bound' (qeshurah—tied, attached) in children's hearts from birth. This reflects the doctrine of original sin (Psalm 51:5, 58:3). The 'rod of correction' (shevet musar—disciplinary rod, corrective training) serves to 'drive it far from him'—removing foolishness through loving discipline. This doesn't endorse child abuse but affirms that children need correction, including appropriate physical discipline administered in love. The goal is moral formation, driving out folly to produce wisdom.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite pedagogy included physical discipline as one element of comprehensive training. Multiple proverbs address this (13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15). Modern contexts differ culturally and legally, requiring wisdom in application. The underlying principle remains: children need loving correction to overcome innate sinfulness and develop godly character. Neglecting discipline harms rather than helps children.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you balance loving nurture with necessary correction in raising or disciplining children?
2. In what ways does recognizing innate foolishness in children's hearts affect your approach to child-rearing or youth ministry?

Interlinear Text

אֵלֶּת	קָשׁוּיָה	בְּלֵב	בְּעֵר	שֶׁבֶט	מִוֶּסֶר
Foolishness	is bound	in the heart	of a child	but the rod	of correction
H200	H7194	H3820	H5288	H7626	H4148
יִרְחִיקָנָה	מִמֶּנּוּ:				
shall drive it far	H4480				
H7368					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:24 (Parallel theme): He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18 (Parallel theme): Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 29:15 (Parallel theme): The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 29:17 (Parallel theme): Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.