

Proverbs 22:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

Analysis

This verse explains the danger of befriending angry people: you will 'learn his ways' (אֶלָף אַרְחָתִי/te'elaf orchotav, literally 'become familiar with/trained in his paths'). Habits, attitudes, and behaviors transfer through relationship. The result is getting 'a snare to thy soul' (מוֹקֵשׁ לְנַפְשָׁךְ/moqesh lenafshekha, trap for your life). What begins as association ends as bondage. This reflects the principle of moral influence: 'Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners' (1 Corinthians 15:33). We become like those we spend time with. Psalm 1:1 pronounces blessing on the one who 'walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.' The progression—walking, standing, sitting—depicts increasing entrenchment. Proverbs repeatedly warns against wrong companions: fools (13:20), gluttons and drunkards (23:20-21), rebels (24:21). Conversely, wise companions make us wiser: 'Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend' (Proverbs 27:17).

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's covenant community structure meant that personal relationships significantly influenced faithfulness to God. Intermarriage with pagans led to idolatry—Solomon's downfall came through his many foreign wives (1 Kings 11:1-8). God commanded separation from Canaanite nations specifically to prevent this (Deuteronomy 7:1-4). The exile to Babylon further emphasized the danger of cultural assimilation—Daniel and his friends resisted Babylonian influence (Daniel 1:8). In the early church, Paul addressed the tension between engaging the world

for evangelism and avoiding corrupting influences. He commanded separation from persistent sinners within the church (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) while maintaining witness to unbelievers. The principle remains: Christians must engage the culture without being conformed to it (Romans 12:2). Discernment is required—we must be 'in the world' but not 'of the world' (John 17:14-16).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What negative attitudes or behaviors have you 'learned' from close associates, and how can you unlearn them?
2. How do you balance maintaining redemptive relationships with protecting yourself from corrupting influences?
3. What criteria do you use to select close friends, mentors, and accountability partners?

Interlinear Text

לֹא תַּלְאֵן אֶרְחָתִךְ וְלֹא תִּקְרַב מִזְקָנֶךָ
H6435 Lest thou learn H502 his ways H734 and get H3947 a snare H4170 to thy soul H5315

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Parallel theme): Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Proverbs 13:20 (Parallel theme): He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Psalms 106:35 (Parallel theme): But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

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