

Proverbs 22:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

Analysis

The 'froward' (Hebrew 'iqqesh'—twisted, perverse) person's way contains 'thorns and snares.' The righteous who 'keep his soul' stays far from them. The wicked's path is dangerous, while the righteous maintains safe distance. This reflects the Reformed principle of separation from sin. We must not only avoid evil acts but avoid situations and associations that lead to evil. The Hebrew 'shamar nephesh' (keep/guard soul) emphasizes active vigilance in protecting oneself spiritually.

Historical Context

Thorns and snares were dangers in ancient travel—thorns causing injury and snares trapping travelers. Using this imagery for the wicked's path emphasized the real, physical dangers of associating with perverse people.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Are there relationships or situations you need to distance yourself from to 'keep your soul'?

2. How do you balance engaging culture with maintaining separation from sin?
3. What does vigilantly guarding your soul look like practically?

Interlinear Text

צַנִּים	פַּ חֲסִים	בְּדֶרֶךְ	עֵקֶשׁ	שׁוֹמֵר	נַפְשׁוֹ
Thorns	and snares	are in the way	of the froward	he that doth keep	his soul
H6791	H6341	H1870	H6141	H8104	H5315
יָרֵחַ קָ	מִמָּהֶם:				
shall be far	H1992				
H7368					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 15:19 (Parallel theme): The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Proverbs 16:17 (Parallel theme): The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

1 John 5:18 (Parallel theme): We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Proverbs 19:16 (Parallel theme): He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

Proverbs 13:15 (Parallel theme): Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Job 18:8 (Parallel theme): For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.