

Proverbs 23:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.

Analysis

This verse expresses parental joy in a child's wisdom. 'My son, if thine heart be wise' (בְּנִי אִם־חָכָם לְבָבְךָ/beni im-chakham libekha, my son, if your heart is wise) establishes the condition. 'My heart shall rejoice, even mine' (וְיִשְׂמַח לִבִּי גַם־אֲנִי/yismach libbi gam-ani, my heart will rejoice, yes, mine) emphasizes the deep personal satisfaction wise children bring parents. The repetition 'even mine' underscores how profoundly children's choices affect parents. This reflects God's relationship with His children—our faithfulness brings Him joy (Zephaniah 3:17; Luke 15:7), while rebellion grieves Him (Ephesians 4:30). Proverbs repeatedly emphasizes this theme (10:1; 15:20; 23:24-25; 27:11; 29:3). Parents cannot control children's choices, but they profoundly experience their consequences. Wise children honor parents (Exodus 20:12); foolish children bring grief (Proverbs 17:25). This motivates parental instruction and children's obedience.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's family structure was multi-generational and interdependent. Children weren't autonomous individuals but covenant community members whose behavior affected the entire family's honor and wellbeing. Wise children brought prestige; foolish ones brought shame. The fifth commandment's promise—'that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee' (Exodus 20:12)—connected family honor to covenant blessing. Rebellious children faced severe consequences, including potential capital punishment for extreme cases (Deuteronomy 21:18-21), though evidence suggests this was rarely if ever

implemented—its function was didactic, underscoring rebellion's gravity. In the New Testament, family relationships were transformed by gospel realities but remained important. Paul commanded: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right' (Ephesians 6:1). The church became spiritual family, with believers as brothers and sisters (1 Timothy 5:1-2).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. If you are a child, how do your choices bring joy or grief to your parents?
2. If you are a parent, how do you balance loving your children unconditionally while longing for their wisdom and faithfulness?
3. How does understanding God's parental heart toward you affect your walk with Him?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------|------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|------------------|
| בְּנִי | אִם | חָכִים | לִבִּי | יִשְׂמַח | לִבִּי | גַם | אֲנִי |
| My son | H518 | be wise | if thine heart | shall rejoice | if thine heart | H1571 | even mine |
| H1121 | | H2449 | H3820 | H8055 | H3820 | | H589 |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 29:3 (Parallel theme): Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.

2 John 1:4 (Parallel theme): I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

Proverbs 4:1 (Parallel theme): Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

Proverbs 2:1 (Parallel theme): My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

Proverbs 1:10 (Parallel theme): My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Zephaniah 3:17 (Parallel theme): The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

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