

Proverbs 23:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

Analysis

'Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way'—this fatherly appeal calls for attentive listening that produces wisdom and intentional direction of the heart toward righteousness. Wisdom requires both receiving instruction and applying it to guide one's inner life. The heart naturally wanders toward folly; conscious effort must redirect it toward God's ways. This isn't self-salvation but describes the believer's active response to grace. Having received a new heart, we must 'guide' (direct, keep) it in wisdom's path through Scripture, prayer, fellowship, and obedience. Sanctification requires both God's power and human responsibility. Hear, be wise, and guide your heart—these verbs demand active participation in growth.

Historical Context

Wisdom literature consistently addresses the 'son,' emphasizing parental responsibility to teach and children's responsibility to receive wisdom and direct their lives accordingly.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Are you actively guiding your heart toward righteousness, or passively drifting?
2. What specific practices help you direct your heart toward wisdom rather than folly?

Interlinear Text

שְׁמַע	אֶתְּ הַ	בְּנִי	וְחָכָם	וְאֲשֶׁר	בְּדֶרֶךְ	לִבְךָ:
Hear	H859	thou my son	and be wise	and guide	in the way	thine heart
H8085		H1121	H2449	H833	H1870	H3820

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 23:26 (Parallel theme): My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Proverbs 23:12 (Parallel theme): Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 6:6 (Parallel theme): Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: