

Proverbs 23:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.

Analysis

Don't desire the ruler's 'dainties: for they are deceitful meat.' The Hebrew 'matam' (dainties/delicacies) and 'lechem kazab' (bread/food of lies) warn that luxurious food from rulers may have strings attached. This isn't about the food itself but about obligations created by accepting favors from the powerful. Reformed theology warns against being bought by worldly benefits. Esau sold his birthright for stew (Genesis 25:29-34). We must not trade spiritual integrity for temporary pleasures or advantages.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern hospitality created obligations. Accepting a ruler's feast implied alliance or submission. 'Deceitful meat' refers to food that appears generous but comes with hidden costs or manipulations.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Are there 'dainties' offered by the world that would compromise your freedom or integrity if accepted?

2. How do you discern when benefits from others come with unacceptable obligations?
3. What does it mean to maintain independence from worldly entanglements while engaging culture?

Interlinear Text

אַל תִּתְּאַזֵּן לְמַבְשָׂמֹת יְהוָה וְלִקְרָבֵם:
 H408 Be not desirous H183 H4303 H1931 meat H3899 H3577

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 23:6 (Parallel theme): Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:

Psalms 141:4 (Parallel theme): Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

Luke 21:34 (Parallel theme): And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Daniel 1:8 (Parallel theme): But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;