

Proverbs 25:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

Analysis

Better to be told 'Come up here' than humiliated before nobles. The Hebrew 'alah' (go up/ascend) versus 'shaphel' (be made low/humiliated) describes honor versus shame. Humility that's later exalted experiences greater glory than pride that's publicly humiliated. Tactical wisdom joins moral virtue here: humility is both right and smart. Pride brings fall; humility brings honor. This anticipates James 4:10: 'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.'

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures made public humiliation devastating. Being demoted publicly destroyed reputation and social standing. Conversely, public elevation brought honor to whole family. This verse offers both moral teaching (be humble) and practical wisdom (humility works better). Throughout Scripture, God exalts the humble and humbles the proud (1 Peter 5:5-6).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Have you experienced God 'moving you up' after humble service or 'moving you down' after prideful presumption?
2. How does pursuing humility strategically (for promotion) differ from pursuing humility virtuously (for godliness)?
3. What would complete indifference to human honor and shame look like if you only sought God's approval?

Interlinear Text

אָמָר כִּי בְּרִית מְלָאָכִים
For better it is that it be said
H3588 H2896 H559

לְכָל הַבָּהָר
unto thee Come up
H0 H5927 H2008

מִן הַשְׁפָט יְלַבֵּשׁ
hither than that thou shouldst be put lower
H8213

לִפְנֵי נָדִיב
in the presence of the prince
H6440 H5081 H834

עִינֵּיכֶן
whom thine eyes
have seen
H7200 H5869

Additional Cross-References

Luke 18:14 (Parallel theme): I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.