

Proverbs 26:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

Analysis

The lazy person says there's a lion in the road, a lion in the streets. The Hebrew 'atsel' (lazy/sluggard) and 'ariy' (lion) creates absurd excuse. Sluggard invents ridiculous dangers to justify inaction. Lions don't roam city streets; this excuse is transparently false. Lazy people manufacture excuses rather than facing responsibilities. Fear becomes rationalization for sloth. While genuine dangers require caution, manufactured fears justify foolish avoidance.

Historical Context

Proverbs frequently mocks sluggard's ridiculous excuses (22:13, 26:16). While wild animals posed real threats in ancient world, lion in city streets was implausible. Modern equivalent might be exaggerating dangers to avoid responsibilities: 'I might fail, get rejected, look foolish, etc.' Fear becomes excuse. Jesus' parable of talents includes servant who buried his talent, making excuses (Matthew 25:24-30). Faithfulness requires courage despite risks.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What implausible 'lions in the street' are you imagining to justify avoiding responsibilities?
2. How do your fears function as rationalizations for laziness rather than legitimate caution?
3. What courage would enable you to face real risks instead of manufacturing imaginary dangers?

Interlinear Text

אִם ר	ע צל	ש חל	בד רך	א ר י	ב ין	הרחקות:
man saith	The slothful	There is a lion	in the way	a lion	H996	is in the streets
H559	H6102	H7826	H1870	H738		H7339

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 22:13 (Parallel theme): The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

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 19:15 (Parallel theme): Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.