

Proverbs 27:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

Analysis

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof (שָׁמַר תְּאֵנָה יָאֵכֶל פְּרִיָּה, shomer te'enah yokhal piryah)—the Hebrew verb שָׁמַר (shamar, 'to keep, guard, watch') emphasizes faithful, attentive care rather than mere ownership. Ancient fig trees required patient cultivation: pruning, protection from pests, watering during dry seasons.

So he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured (שָׁמַר אֶדְנָיו יִכְבֹּד, shomer adonav yekhubbad)—the parallel reveals vocational faithfulness as spiritual discipline. The term כָּבֹד (kavod, 'honor, weight, glory') suggests not empty praise but substantial reward. Jesus extends this principle in the parable of the faithful servant (Luke 12:42-44), where stewardship leads to greater responsibility.

Historical Context

In ancient Israelite agriculture, fig trees were among the most valuable assets, providing food, shade, and trade goods. Unlike grain harvests requiring seasonal labor, fig cultivation demanded year-round attention. Solomon's proverb reflects an agrarian economy where long-term faithfulness, not quick gains, produced wealth.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'fig tree' has God entrusted to your care that requires patient, long-term faithfulness?
2. How does our culture's demand for instant results conflict with the biblical principle of faithful stewardship?
3. In what ways might you be 'waiting on your Master' with the expectation of eternal honor rather than immediate recognition?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁמַע ר	נָצַר	תְּאַנְהָה	וְאָכַל	פְּרִי הַ	תְּאַנְהָה	וְאָכַל	נָצַר	וְשָׁמַע ר
Whoso keepeth	the fig tree	shall eat	the fruit	thereof so he that waiteth				
H5341	H8384	H398	H6529	H8104				

אָלָתָה	וְאָכַל
on his master	shall be honoured

H113 H3513

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 2:6 (Parallel theme): The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

1 Corinthians 9:7 (Parallel theme): Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

Song of Solomon 8:12: My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

1 Corinthians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Luke 12:37 (Parallel theme): Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Proverbs 22:29 (Parallel theme): Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Matthew 24:46 (Parallel theme): Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

John 12:26 (Parallel theme): If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Luke 19:17 (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

1 Peter 2:21 (Parallel theme): For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: