

Proverbs 27:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

Analysis

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place—The Hebrew noded (נדד, 'wanders/flees') suggests restless instability, not purposeful travel. The bird that abandons her qen (קן, 'nest') leaves eggs or fledglings vulnerable to predators. Similarly, a man who wanders from his maqom (מקום, 'place/position') abandons responsibilities, relationships, and calling for rootless instability.

This isn't condemnation of all travel but of chronic instability—the perpetual malcontent who believes fulfillment lies elsewhere. Wisdom literature consistently values stability, faithfulness, and contentment in one's appointed sphere (Ecclesiastes 10:4, Proverbs 17:24). The grass appears greener where you don't water it.

Historical Context

Israelite society was strongly rooted in family land inheritance (nachalah) and community responsibility. Abandoning one's place meant forsaking covenant obligations, social connections, and the stability that enabled flourishing. The wisdom tradition, reflecting Ancient Near Eastern values, prized loyalty and rootedness over restless ambition.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'nest' (responsibilities, relationships, calling) are you tempted to abandon when difficulties arise?
2. How does our culture's celebration of perpetual reinvention conflict with biblical wisdom about stability?
3. What's the difference between God-directed change and restless discontent that perpetually seeks escape?

Interlinear Text

כְּצִפּוֹר	נוֹדֵד	מִן	קִנְיָהּ	כֵּן	אִישׁ	נוֹדֵד
As a bird	that wandereth	H4480	from her nest	H3651	so is a man	that wandereth
H6833	H5074		H7064		H376	H5074

מִמְקוֹמוֹ:
from his place
H4725

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 16:2 (Parallel theme): For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

Proverbs 21:16 (Parallel theme): The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

1 Corinthians 7:20 (Parallel theme): Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

Jonah 1:3 (Parallel theme): But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

1 Kings 19:9 (Parallel theme): And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

1 Samuel 22:5 (Parallel theme): And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

Proverbs 26:2 (Parallel theme): As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

Genesis 4:16 (Parallel theme): And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.