

Proverbs 28:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Analysis

This proverb addresses confession and repentance: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' Covering (kasah) sins—hiding, concealing, refusing to acknowledge them—prevents prosperity (tsalach—success, flourishing). Attempting to hide sin from God is futile (Psalm 139:7-12) and spiritually destructive. Conversely, confessing (yadah—acknowledging, declaring) and forsaking (azab—leaving, abandoning) sins results in mercy (racham—compassion, pity). This establishes the pattern: repentance involves both confession (admitting sin) and forsaking (turning from it). God shows mercy to those who honestly confess and genuinely repent. 1 John 1:9 promises: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.'

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's sacrificial system required confession of sin accompanying sacrifice (Leviticus 5:5, 16:21). Confession acknowledged guilt and the need for atonement. The prophets condemned hypocritical worship that maintained outward ritual while concealing ongoing sin (Isaiah 1:11-17). True repentance involves honest confession and genuine transformation. New Covenant Christians confess to God directly through Christ our mediator.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What sins are you attempting to cover or hide rather than honestly confessing to God?
2. How does understanding that confession must accompany forsaking sin guard against cheap grace or superficial repentance?

Interlinear Text

הַמְכֹסֵה	כִּי שְׁעֵיוֹ	לֹא יִצְלֵי	וּמוֹדֵה
He that covereth	his sins	shall not prosper	but whoso confesseth
H3680	H6588	H3808 H6743	H3034
וְיָצַח	יִרְחֻם:		
and forsaketh	them shall have mercy		
H5800	H7355		

Additional Cross-References

Job 31:33 (Sin): If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

Job 33:27 (Sin): He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

Acts 26:20 (Parallel theme): But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Psalms 51:10 (Parallel theme): Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Genesis 4:9 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

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