

Proverbs 28:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

Analysis

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool (בּוֹטֵחׁ בְּלֹבֶן הָוֹא קְסִיל), boteach belibbo hu khesil)—בְּתַחַת (batach, 'to trust, be confident') in one's own לֵב (lev, 'heart, mind, inner self') makes one a קְסִיל (kesil, 'fool, dullard'). Jeremiah 17:9 explains why: 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' Self-trust is folly because the self deceives. Modern 'follow your heart' advice is anti-biblical—our hearts need transformation, not trust.

But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered (וְהַולֵּךְ בְּחִכְמָה הָוֹא יִמְלֹט), veholekh vechokhmah hu yimmalet)—הַלֵּךְ (halakh, 'to walk, go') in חִכְמָה (chokhmah, 'wisdom') leads to מַלְטָה (malat, 'to escape, be delivered, slip away'). Wisdom means submitting to God's revelation rather than inner feelings. Proverbs 3:5-6: 'Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.'

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature consistently warned against trusting human wisdom apart from divine guidance. Egypt's wisdom literature similarly emphasized the limits of human understanding. Israel's distinctive contribution was identifying true wisdom with the fear of YHWH (Proverbs 9:10)—wisdom is not human achievement but divine gift received through revelation and obedience.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what areas are you trusting your own judgment rather than seeking God's wisdom in Scripture?
2. How does modern culture's 'trust yourself' mantra conflict with biblical wisdom?
3. What practices help you 'walk wisely' by submitting your heart to God's Word?

Interlinear Text

הוּא	בָּטָן	בָּטָן	לְבָבָוּ	אֵלָה	כִּי	וְ	הַזְּלָלָה
He that trusteth	in his own heart			H1931	is a fool	but whoso walketh	
H982		H3820			H3684		H1980
וְ	בָּטָן	בָּטָן	לְבָבָוּ	אֵלָה	כִּי	וְ	הַזְּלָלָה
wisely		H1931	he shall be delivered				
				H4422			

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 3:5 (Faith): Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Job 28:28 (Parallel theme): And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Jeremiah 17:9 (Parallel theme): The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Romans 8:7 (Parallel theme): Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

James 1:5 (Parallel theme): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

2 Timothy 3:15 (Faith): And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Kings 8:13 (Parallel theme): And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

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