

Proverbs 29:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer.

Analysis

A servant will not be corrected by words—The Hebrew *eved* (servant, slave) here represents one resistant to verbal instruction alone. Though **he understand** (*yavin*, discern, comprehend), **he will not answer** (*ein ma'aneh*, there is no response). Understanding without compliance reflects hardened will.

This proverb addresses leadership challenges: some individuals require more than verbal rebuke—they need tangible consequences. The issue isn't intellectual deficit but volitional rebellion. The New Testament distinguishes between those who 'have ears to hear' and those who suppress truth (Romans 1:32, 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Effective discipline adapts to the heart's condition, not merely repeating words to stubborn ears.

Historical Context

Ancient household management involved masters overseeing servants/slaves. While some responded to instruction, others required firmer measures. The Mosaic law regulated servant treatment (Exodus 21), balancing authority with limits on abuse. Wisdom literature recognized that mere words don't always produce obedience—a reality in family, workplace, and societal governance.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. When have you found yourself understanding truth but resisting obedience?
What broke through?
2. How do you discern when someone needs more than verbal correction to change course?
3. What role do consequences play in genuine repentance versus superficial compliance?

Interlinear Text

בְּדִבְרִים	לֹא	יִסְרָ	עַבְדְּ	כִּי	יִבְיִן
by words	H3808	will not be corrected	A servant	H3588	for though he understand
H1697		H3256	H5650		H995
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וְיֹאמֶר	מַעֲנֶה:				
H369	he will not answer				
	H4617				

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