

Proverbs 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

Analysis

This verse introduces chapter 3's series of commands for wise living. 'Forget not my law' (אֶל-תִּשְׁכַּח/torati al-tishkach) uses 'torah' (law/instruction) to denote fatherly teaching rooted in God's revealed will. Forgetting is not mere intellectual lapse but functional rejection—living as if the commandments don't matter. The positive complement, 'let thine heart keep my commandments,' employs 'natsar' (נָצַר), meaning guard, preserve, observe carefully. The 'heart' (לֵב/lev) as the center of volition and affection must actively maintain the commandments, not merely the memory. The verse promises blessing for obedience (v.2): 'length of days, and long life, and peace.' This reflects covenant theology where faithfulness to God's commands brings flourishing.

Historical Context

Solomon wrote these instructions as a father to his son, following the ancient Near Eastern tradition of wisdom literature.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What specific commandments or biblical teachings have you functionally 'forgotten' by not applying them?
2. How can you move from merely knowing God's commands to actively guarding them in your heart?

Interlinear Text

בְּנִי	תּוֹרַתִּי	אֶל	תִּשְׁכַּח	וּמִצְוֹתַי	יִצָּר	לִבִּי:
My son	not my law	H408	forget	my commandments	keep	but let thine heart
H1121	H8451		H7911	H4687	H5341	H3820

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 4:5 (Word): Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Psalms 119:16 (Word): I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Proverbs 1:8 (Word): My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Psalms 119:93 (Parallel theme): I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.

Psalms 119:34 (Word): Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

Psalms 119:11 (Word): Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Jeremiah 31:33 (Word): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Deuteronomy 8:1 (Word): All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

Psalms 119:153 (Word): Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

Hosea 4:6 (Word): My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

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