

Proverbs 31:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Analysis

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness—The ו (tsade) line uses tsophiyah (watches over/oversees), a term for watchmen or sentinels (Isaiah 52:8, Ezekiel 3:17). The eshet chayil vigilantly monitors her household's halikhot (ways/doings)—not micromanaging but exercising responsible oversight. This is active leadership, not passive presence.

Eateth not the bread of idleness (lechem atslut lo tokhel) directly opposes the sluggard (atsel) condemned throughout Proverbs (6:6-11, 13:4, 19:24, 20:4, 24:30-34). Atslut (idleness/slothfulness) is moral failure, not mere inefficiency. She refuses to consume without contributing, to benefit from others' labor while shirking her own. Her diligence is covenant faithfulness—stewarding God's gifts rather than squandering them.

Historical Context

Household management in ancient times required constant vigilance—overseeing servants, monitoring supplies, ensuring children were cared for and educated, maintaining productive rhythms. The household was an economic unit requiring active leadership to function properly. Sloth threatened not just personal comfort but family survival.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. In what areas of your life are you 'eating the bread of idleness'—consuming without contributing?
2. How does vigilant oversight differ from anxious micromanagement or passive neglect?
3. What would it mean to view diligence as covenant faithfulness rather than mere productivity?

Interlinear Text

ל א	ע צל ות	ולֹם	בֵּית ה	הַלִּיכ ות	צ ופִּיה
	of idleness	not the bread	of her household	to the ways	She looketh well
H3808	H6104	H3899	H1004	H1979	H6822

תֹּאכֵל:
and eateth
H398

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 5:10 (Parallel theme): Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Titus 2:4 (Parallel theme): That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

Proverbs 14:1 (Parallel theme): Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 (Parallel theme): And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

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