

Proverbs 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

Analysis

Walking wisdom's path provides unhindered progress; running brings no stumbling. The Hebrew 'halak' (walk) and 'ruwts' (run) describe normal and hurried pace. Whether moving deliberately or quickly, wisdom keeps you from falling. This promises that wise living provides spiritual sure-footedness regardless of life's pace. Hurried circumstances don't excuse unwise choices; wisdom guides in all situations.

Historical Context

Ancient travel involved literal dangers - rough terrain, obstacles, predators. The metaphor would resonate powerfully. Spiritually, Israel's wilderness journey illustrated that following God's guidance brings safe passage despite hazardous conditions. Psalm 119:105 similarly describes God's Word as lamp guiding footsteps.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When life's pace increases, what wisdom helps you avoid stumbling?
2. How does wisdom provide sure-footedness that circumstances alone cannot?
3. What obstacles threaten to trip you, and how does divine wisdom help you navigate them?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	בְּלֹכְתָּב	רִצְצָר	בְּצָעֵד	וְאִם	רַצְצָר
H1980	H3808	shall not be straitened	thy steps	H518	and when thou runnest
		H3334	H6806		H7323

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 3:23 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

Psalms 18:36 (Parallel theme): Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

2 Samuel 22:37 (Parallel theme): Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.

1 Peter 2:8 (Parallel theme): And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Proverbs 4:19 (Parallel theme): The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.