

Proverbs 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Analysis

The prohibition: enter not the path of the wicked, go not in the way of evil men. The double negative emphasizes comprehensive avoidance - don't start down that path, and if you've started, don't continue. The imagery of paths presents life as journey requiring constant directional decisions. Association with the wicked and adoption of their ways are linked - companionship influences conduct. Therefore, avoiding evil requires avoiding evildoers.

Historical Context

Reflects covenant community ethics where separation from wickedness preserved holiness. Israel was called to be distinct from surrounding nations, avoiding their practices and associations that would corrupt covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What 'paths of the wicked' are you currently walking that need to be abandoned?
2. How do your associations influence your conduct, and what changes might be necessary?

Interlinear Text

בְּדַךְ רֶךְ תַּאֲשֵׁר וְאַל תַּשְׁעֵם בְּאֶלְעָם
not into the path of the wicked H408 Enter H408 and go not in the way H1870

רָעִים:
of evil
H7451

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 1:1 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Evil): Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

Proverbs 1:10 (Parallel theme): My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Proverbs 1:15 (Parallel theme): My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

Proverbs 9:6 (Parallel theme): Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Proverbs 13:20 (Parallel theme): He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

