

Proverbs 4:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Analysis

Inclining the ear demonstrates humble receptivity to God's word. Attention to His sayings demands sustained focus, fighting distraction and spiritual dullness. This posture of active listening is prerequisite to obedience—we cannot follow what we have not heard with understanding.

Historical Context

Public reading of Torah in Israel's assemblies required attentive listening (Nehemiah 8:3). Personal devotion mirrored corporate worship in demanding focused concentration on divine revelation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do you cultivate attentive listening when reading or hearing Scripture?

2. What typically distracts you from fully focusing on God's word?

Interlinear Text

בְּנִי	לְדַבֵּר י	הִקְשׁ יָהּ	לְאָמַר י	הִט	אֲזְנֶיךָ:
My son	to my words	attend	unto my sayings	incline	thine ear
H1121	H1697	H7181	H561	H5186	H241

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 5:1 (Parallel theme): My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

Isaiah 55:3 (Parallel theme): Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Proverbs 7:1 (Word): My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

Psalms 78:1 (Word): Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

Matthew 17:5 (Parallel theme): While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Psalms 90:12 (Parallel theme): So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.