

Proverbs 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Analysis

This verse boldly declares wisdom as the supreme acquisition. 'Wisdom is the principal thing' (חָכְמָה/re'shit chokhmah) uses 're'shit' (beginning/chief thing) to establish wisdom as the highest priority, the foundation for everything else. 'Therefore get wisdom' (גַּנְהַת חָכְמָה/qeneh chokhmah) employs the commercial verb 'qanah,' meaning purchase, acquire, buy. Wisdom costs something—time, effort, sometimes material resources (paying for education). The parallel phrase 'with all thy getting get understanding' (בְּכָל-קִנְתָּב קִנְתָּב/qinah binyah/bekhol-qinyanecha qeneh vinah) emphasizes that amid all other acquisitions, understanding must be obtained. This verse calls for prioritizing wisdom above wealth, pleasure, or status. It anticipates Jesus' command to 'seek first the kingdom of God' (Matthew 6:33) and Paul's counting all else as loss compared to knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8).

Historical Context

This proverb reflects the priority ancient Israelite culture placed on acquiring wisdom above material wealth.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What do your priorities and schedule reveal about whether wisdom is truly your 'principal thing'?
2. What might you need to sacrifice or reorder to make acquiring wisdom your highest pursuit?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵשׁ יִתְ	שְׁכַנְתִּי	לְזִינְתִּי	שְׁכַנְתִּי	וְכֹל
is the principal thing	Wisdom	therefore get	Wisdom	H3605
H7225	H2451	H7069	H2451	
בִּינָה:	לְזִינְתִּי	לְזִינְתִּי		
and with all thy getting	therefore get	get understanding		
H7075	H7069	H998		

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 7:12 (Parallel theme): For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Proverbs 23:23 (Parallel theme): Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Proverbs 16:16 (Parallel theme): How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!