

Proverbs 7:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Analysis

This command uses vivid imagery to emphasize treasuring God's commandments. 'Keep my commandments, and live' directly links obedience to life—a recurring biblical theme. 'Keep my law as the apple of thine eye' uses 'apple' (literally the pupil or center of the eye), which we instinctively protect. The imagery teaches: guard God's law with the same reflexive care you protect your eyes. Any threat to the eye triggers instant protective response; similarly, any threat to God's commandments should provoke immediate defense. This vivid metaphor appears elsewhere (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8; Zechariah 2:8) to describe something precious requiring utmost protection.

Historical Context

The parental instruction format ('my son...keep my commandments') reflects ancient Israelite pedagogy where fathers taught sons covenant faithfulness. The visceral imagery of eye protection would resonate powerfully in a world where eye injuries could mean permanent blindness and social marginalization. The comparison elevated Torah to ultimate preciousness.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Do you protect God's word with the same instinctive care you protect your physical eyes from harm?
2. What specific threats to biblical truth in your life require more vigilant guarding?

Interlinear Text

שְׁמֵר	מִצְוֹתַי	וְחִיָּה	וְתוֹרַתִּי	כְּאֵשׁ אֵן	עֵינֶיךָ:
Keep	my commandments	and live	and my law	as the apple	of thine eye
H8104	H4687	H2421	H8451	H380	H5869

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 17:8 (Parallel theme): Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

Leviticus 18:5 (Parallel theme): Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

Proverbs 4:4 (Word): He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

John 15:14 (Parallel theme): Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

John 14:21 (Word): He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

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 4:13 (Parallel theme): Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

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