

Proverbs 8:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Analysis

Wisdom walks in righteousness, in the midst of justice's paths. The Hebrew 'halak' (walk), 'tsedaqah' (righteousness), and 'mishpat' (justice/judgment) describe wisdom's moral trajectory. Wisdom doesn't merely know right but does right. Path language indicates consistent life direction, not occasional right actions. Wisdom produces habitual righteousness and justice. True wisdom necessarily includes moral living.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom sometimes separated cleverness from morality - achieving success regardless of ethics. Biblical wisdom insists on integration: true wisdom is inherently moral. Cleverness without righteousness is devilish wisdom (James 3:15). Jesus embodied perfect wisdom and perfect righteousness inseparably. For Christians, wisdom is Christ, who 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness' (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish godly wisdom (inherently righteous) from worldly cleverness (potentially immoral)?
2. What areas of life have you separated practical success from moral integrity?
3. How does Christ as wisdom incarnate integrate all truth and goodness inseparably?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵרַח	צִדְקָה	אֶהְיֶה	בְּתוֹךְ	נְתִיב	מִשְׁפָּט:
in the way	of righteousness	I lead	in the midst	of the paths	of judgment
H734	H6666	H1980	H8432	H5410	H4941

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 5:32 (Parallel theme): Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Psalms 32:8 (Parallel theme): I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Isaiah 2:3 (Parallel theme): And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Proverbs 6:22 (Parallel theme): When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

Proverbs 3:6 (Parallel theme): In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.