

Psalms 119:101

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

Analysis

I have refrained my feet from every evil way מִקְלָאָרָח בְּעֵבֶל אֶתְתִּי בְּגָלִי—mikkal-orach ra kaliti raglai)—Kala (refrain, restrain, shut up) implies forceful self-control. Orach (path, way) represents behavioral patterns; ra (evil, bad) encompasses all sinful trajectories. **That I might keep thy word** לְמַעַן אֲשִׁמָּר לְבָרָךְ—lema'an eshmor devarekha)—Purpose clause: restraint serves observance of God's davar (word, thing, matter).

This is practical sanctification: avoiding evil isn't merely negative prohibition but positive preservation—clearing the path to obey. Proverbs 4:14-15 commands, "Enter not into the path of the wicked... avoid it, pass not by it." Joseph fled Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12); Paul urged Timothy to "flee youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22). The psalmist's raglai (feet) recall Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet"—Scripture illuminates, then believers navigate accordingly.

Historical Context

Ancient roads were dangerous—bandits, wild animals, false trails. Choosing the right path was survival. Deuteronomy 30:19's "choose life" wasn't abstract theology but concrete ethics: walk God's way or perish. Pilgrimage psalms (120-134) developed this metaphor of the righteous journey.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What specific "evil ways" do you need to actively refrain from—not just avoid passively but shut the door forcefully?
2. How does obeying God's Word require not just doing right things but refusing wrong paths?

Interlinear Text

לֹא־מֵעַן בְּגַלְּךָ אֶבְּרַח מִקְּלָל
H3605 way H734 from every evil H7451 I have refrained H3607 my feet H7272 H4616

דְּבָרָבָן אַשְׁמָתְךָ
H8104 that I might keep H1697 thy word

Additional Cross-References

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

Isaiah 55:7 (Evil): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Psalms 119:104 (Parallel theme): Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

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