

Psalms 119:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

Analysis

They also do no iniquity (לֹא־פָעַלּוּ עֲוֹלָה) —the Hebrew עֲוֹלָה (avlah, 'iniquity') denotes perversion, moral crookedness, or deviation from the straight path. The psalmist describes the positive characteristic of those who keep God's testimonies (v. 2): they actively avoid twisted behavior. The verb פָּעַל (pa'al, 'do') emphasizes that righteousness is not passive—these faithful ones actively do not practice unrighteousness.

They walk in his ways (בְּדַרְכָּיו הֵלְכוּ) —halak (הֵלַךְ, 'to walk') is the fundamental Hebrew metaphor for lifestyle and conduct. God's 'ways' (derekh, דֶּרֶךְ) are His ordained paths of covenant obedience. This verse establishes the essential connection between negative righteousness (avoiding evil) and positive righteousness (actively pursuing God's paths). As Jesus would later teach, the house swept clean but left empty invites worse demons (Matthew 12:43-45)—true holiness requires both forsaking sin and embracing obedience.

Historical Context

Psalms 119, the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible (176 verses), is an elaborate acrostic poem where each eight-verse section corresponds to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Written likely during or after the Babylonian exile, it reflects intense devotion to Torah when the temple was destroyed and God's written Word became Israel's primary means of knowing Him. The psalm uses eight synonyms for God's Word throughout (law, testimonies, precepts, statutes,

commandments, judgments, word, promise), demonstrating comprehensive reverence for divine revelation.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does your pursuit of righteousness balance both 'doing no iniquity' and actively 'walking in His ways'?
2. In what ways might modern believers emphasize avoiding sin while neglecting the positive pursuit of God's paths, or vice versa?

Interlinear Text

וְ	אֵל	לֹא	פָּעַל וְ	עַל הַ	בְּדַרְכֵי יוֹ	הֵלְכוּ:
H637	H3808	They also do	no iniquity	in his ways	they walk	
		H6466	H5766	H1870	H1980	

Additional Cross-References

1 John 5:18 (Sin): We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

1 John 3:9 (Sin): Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.