

Psalm 119:70

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law.

Analysis

Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law. The metaphor **fat as grease** (תָּמֵן כַּחְלֵב, tafish kachelev) describes spiritual insensitivity and moral dullness. In Hebrew thought, the heart was the center of understanding and will. A 'fat' heart is unresponsive, callous, impervious to truth—like adipose tissue that cannot feel or respond to stimulus. Isaiah warned Israel about hearts growing 'dull' (Isaiah 6:10), a condition Jesus cited regarding those who reject Him (Matthew 13:15).

The contrast **but I delight in thy law** (אַנְּיָה תֹּרְתָּךְ שְׁעָשָׂעָתִי, ani toratekha shi'asha'ti) shows spiritual sensitivity—the capacity to find pleasure in God's instruction. **Delight** (שָׁעֵשׂ, sha'a) implies joyful preoccupation and deep satisfaction. While the proud have hearts too insensitive to perceive truth's beauty, the believer's responsive heart finds supreme pleasure in God's Torah. This spiritual contrast determines eternal destiny.

Historical Context

Israel's prophets repeatedly warned against hardened hearts—the consequence of persistent rebellion. Pharaoh's hardened heart exemplified this (Exodus 8:15, 32). Prosperity often produced spiritual insensitivity, as Jeshurun 'grew fat and kicked' (Deuteronomy 32:15). The exilic prophets called for circumcision of the heart (Deuteronomy 30:6, Jeremiah 4:4), anticipating the New Covenant promise of transformed hearts (Ezekiel 36:26). Only divine grace can cure spiritual obesity and create delight in God's law.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What symptoms might indicate your heart is growing 'fat' with spiritual insensitivity—dullness toward sin, boredom with Scripture, indifference to God?
2. Do you genuinely 'delight' in God's law, or is obedience primarily duty? What might cultivate deeper delight?
3. How can believers guard against the prosperity and comfort that often produce spiritually 'fat' hearts?

Interlinear Text

שׁׁעַשְׁעַתִּים תֹּרְכָּתָב אָנֹכִי לְבָבֵךְ כַּחַתְּפָנֶשׁ
is as fat as grease Their heart in thy law but I delight
H2954 H2459 H3820 H589 H8451 H8173

Additional Cross-References

Acts 28:27 (Parallel theme): For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Psalms 17:10 (Parallel theme): They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

Isaiah 6:10 (Parallel theme): Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Psalms 73:7 (Parallel theme): Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

Psalms 119:16 (Word): I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

Psalms 119:35 (Word): Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

Psalms 40:8 (Word): I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Romans 7:22 (Word): For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

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