

Psalms 141:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

Analysis

"Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties." The prayer *al tat libbi l'davar ra* (do not incline my heart to any evil thing) asks God to prevent inner disposition toward evil. *Natah* (incline/stretch/bend) means to direct, turn toward; *lev* (heart) represents will, affections, mind. *Davar ra* (evil thing/word). The heart's inclination determines conduct. *Lhit'olel alilot b'resha* (to practice wicked deeds with wickedness). *Po'al* (practice/do); *alilah* (deed/act). *Im anshei aven* (with men of iniquity). *Aven* (iniquity/wickedness/idolatry). *U'val el'chamah b'man'ammehem* (and let me not feast on their delicacies). *Lacham* (eat/feast); *man'am* (dainty/delicacy). Fellowship meals signified partnership—eating with evil workers implied approval, participation.

Historical Context

Scripture repeatedly warns against fellowship with evildoers. Israel was commanded not to intermarry with Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:3-4) or adopt their practices (Leviticus 18:3). Solomon's foreign wives turned his heart to idols (1 Kings 11:1-8). Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab brought disaster (2 Chronicles 18-19). Paul commanded: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14) and "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). Yet believers must engage unbelievers evangelistically (1 Corinthians 5:9-10)—the issue is partnership in evil, not all interaction. Jesus ate

with sinners for redemptive purposes (Mark 2:15-17), contrasting with Pharisaic separation.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What "dainties" (tempting pleasures) of the wicked tempt you toward compromise?
2. How can believers maintain both evangelistic engagement with unbelievers and separation from their evil practices?
3. What does it mean to ask God not to "incline your heart" toward evil, given human responsibility for sin?

Interlinear Text

אֶל	תֵּט	לִבִּי	לְדָבָר	כָּע	לְהַתֵּעַ וְלִ	עֲלֵל וְתִן
H408	Incline	not my heart	thing	to any evil	to practise	works
	H5186	H3820	H1697	H7451	H5953	H5949
שָׁעָרַי	אֶת	אִישׁ יָם	פְּעָלֵי	אֶוֹן	וּבֹל	אֶלֶּם מִן
wicked	H854	H582	that work	iniquity	H1077	and let me not eat
H7562			H6466	H205		H3898
בְּמִנְעֵמִיָּהֶם:						
of their dainties						
H4516						

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:13 (Evil): And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Psalms 119:36 (Parallel theme): Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Isaiah 63:17 (Parallel theme): O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Evil): Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

2 Corinthians 6:17 (Parallel theme): Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

1 Kings 8:58 (Parallel theme): That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

1 Corinthians 10:31 (Parallel theme): Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

James 1:13 (Evil): Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Revelation 18:4 (Sin): And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Deuteronomy 29:4 (Parallel theme): Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.