

Proverbs 11:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

Analysis

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hates suretiship is sure. Becoming financial guarantor for strangers (zarim - foreigners, unknown persons) brings trouble. Hating such arrangements provides security. This practical wisdom warns against reckless financial commitments. While generosity is virtuous, wisdom requires discernment - helping those you don't know well through risky guarantees often ends badly.

Historical Context

Suretiship (guaranteeing another's debt) was common in ancient economy but risky - defaulted loans meant the guarantor paid. Proverbs repeatedly warns against such arrangements (6:1-5, 11:15, 17:18, 22:26).

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Have you made financial commitments on others' behalf that were unwise?
2. How do you balance generosity with prudent financial stewardship?

Interlinear Text

רֹעֵה יְהִי כִּי רֹבֶב יְהִי שְׁנָא אֵשׁ
H7451 H7489 H3588 He that is surety for a stranger for it and he that hateth
H6148 H2114 H8130

בָּזְבֻּנָּה תַּקְשִׁיעַ יְמִינָה

suretiship is sure
H8628 H982

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:18 (Parallel theme): A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

Proverbs 20:16 (Parallel theme): Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

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