

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 suretyship 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

Suretyship (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

Psalms 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?

2