

Proverbs 18:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

Analysis

Showing partiality to the wicked and overthrowing the righteous in judgment are both evil. The Hebrew 'nasa panim' (accept/lift up the face) refers to favoritism based on status or bribes. To 'overthrow' (Hebrew 'natah'—turn aside, pervert) the righteous denies them justice. Reformed theology insists on impartial justice reflecting God's character (Deuteronomy 10:17). God shows no partiality, and neither should His people. This applies to judicial systems, church discipline, and personal relationships. Justice must be blind to status and favor, considering only truth and righteousness.

Historical Context

Mosaic law repeatedly commanded impartial justice (Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:17). Israel's judges were to show no favoritism to rich or poor but render verdicts based solely on evidence and law.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Do you show partiality in your judgments based on wealth, status, or relationship?
2. How can you ensure that your evaluations of others are fair and impartial?
3. What systems can be implemented in your spheres of influence to prevent favoritism?

Interlinear Text

שָׁאַת פָּנִי רְשָׁעַ לֹא טָבַת וְתַלְתָּן
to accept the person of the wicked It is not good to overthrow
H5375 H6440 H7563 H3808 H2896 H5186

בְּמִשְׁפָּטִים יְדִין יְהִי
the righteous in judgment
H6662 H4941

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:15 (Righteousness): Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Proverbs 28:21 (Good): To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.

Deuteronomy 16:19 (Righteousness): Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

Psalms 82:2 (Righteousness): How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

Proverbs 17:15 (Righteousness): He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Proverbs 24:23 (Judgment): These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

Isaiah 5:23 (Righteousness): Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

Job 34:19 (Parallel theme): How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

Matthew 22:16 (Parallel theme): And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

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