

Proverbs 21:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

Analysis

Loving pleasure and luxury leads to poverty—'shall be a poor man.' Wine and oil represent indulgence and sensual gratification. Those who prioritize comfort and pleasure squander resources that should be stewarded wisely. This isn't condemning legitimate enjoyment of God's gifts but warning against making pleasure an idol. When present gratification becomes life's organizing principle, financial and spiritual ruin follow. The hedonist mortgages future stability for momentary pleasure. By contrast, the wise person practices self-control, delayed gratification, and proper priorities. The principle extends beyond economics: those who live for pleasure miss life's true purpose—glorifying God. Eternal pleasures at God's right hand far exceed temporal indulgence.

Historical Context

Wine and oil were luxury items in ancient Israel, representing abundance and celebration. Excessive consumption indicated wasteful living that would deplete resources.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What pleasures or comforts are you pursuing at the expense of faithful stewardship?
2. How can you cultivate self-control and contentment rather than chasing sensual gratification?

Interlinear Text

אֲנָשָׁן אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ שְׁמַךְ־הָנָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ שְׁמַךְ־הָנָה וְאֶת־בָּנָה וְאֶת־בָּנָה

man shall be a poor He that loveth pleasure He that loveth wine and oil

H376 H4270 H157 H8057 H157 H3196 H8081

לֹא יִשְׂרִיר׃
shall not be rich

H3808 H6238

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 23:21 (Parallel theme): For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

1 Timothy 5:6 (Parallel theme): But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

2 Timothy 3:4 (Love): Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

Proverbs 21:20 (Parallel theme): There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.