

Proverbs 23:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

Analysis

'Be not among winebibbers' and 'riotous eaters of flesh' warns against association with drunkards and gluttons. Such people pursue sensual indulgence, making pleasure ultimate. The warning isn't merely about substances but about character —those who organize life around gratification demonstrate spiritual bankruptcy. Believers must not form close bonds with such people or adopt their values. While we engage sinners evangelistically, we don't embrace their lifestyles or make them our intimate companions. Paul echoes this: 'Bad company corrupts good character' (1 Corinthians 15:33). Friendship shapes character; choosing companions wisely is essential to pursuing godliness. Avoid those whose lives center on fleshly indulgence.

Historical Context

Drunkenness and gluttony were consistently condemned in Scripture as lacking self-control. Roman culture's notorious excess made this warning particularly relevant for early Christians.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Do your close friendships reinforce godliness or pull you toward worldly indulgence?
2. What relationships might you need to distance from to protect your pursuit of holiness?

Interlinear Text

בְּשֶׁר בָּלֶל בְּצִבְאֵי תַּהֲרֵךְ אֶל
Be not among winebibbers among riotous eaters of flesh
H408 H1961 H5433 H3196 H2151 H1320

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Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:18 (Parallel theme): And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Luke 21:34 (Parallel theme): And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Isaiah 5:22 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

Romans 13:13 (Parallel theme): Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Matthew 24:49 (Parallel theme): And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Isaiah 22:13 (Parallel theme): And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

Isaiah 5:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

Proverbs 28:7 (Parallel theme): Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.

Proverbs 20:1 (Parallel theme): Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Luke 15:13 (Parallel theme): And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

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