

# Proverbs 28:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

## Analysis

**A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit** (אָדָם עֲשָׂק בְּדַם־נֶפֶשׁ עַד־בָּור יָנוּס)—עֲשָׂק (ashaq, 'oppressed, burdened') by דַם (dam, 'blood') of נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, 'soul, life, person') indicates guilt for murder. This one יָנוּס (yanus, 'flees, runs away') to the בָּור (bor, 'pit, cistern, grave')—whether execution or death fleeing justice.

**Let no man stay him** (אַל־יִתְמַכְּבוּ, al-yitmeku-vo)—the prohibition: none should **תָמַךְ** (tamakh, 'support, uphold, sustain') the murderer. This is not vigilante violence but rejection of harboring the guilty. Cities of refuge (Numbers 35) protected the accidental killer but not the intentional murderer. Genesis 9:6 establishes the sanctity of human life: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'

## Historical Context

Ancient Israel's law distinguished intentional murder from accidental homicide (Exodus 21:12-14, Deuteronomy 19:1-13). Cities of refuge protected the latter; the former faced execution. The avenger of blood pursued murderers who forfeited the right to protection. This proverb reinforces capital punishment for murder, established from Noah onward (Genesis 9:6).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does this proverb uphold the sanctity and value of human life?
2. What does it mean to 'stay' (support) someone who is guilty of bloodshed—and why is this forbidden?
3. How should justice and mercy interact when dealing with violent offenders?

## Interlinear Text

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אָ	נָ	עַ	לְ	תְּ	לְ	נָ	לְ	בְּ	רָ	לְ	לָ
<b>A man</b>	<b>that doeth violence</b>		<b>to the blood</b>		<b>of any person</b>		<b>to the pit</b>		<b>shall flee</b>		
H120	H6231		H1818		H5315		H953		H5127		
אַל	תִּתְمַכֵּ	בְּ									
H408	<b>let no man stay</b>	H0									
	H8551										

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 9:6** (Blood): Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

**Exodus 21:14** (Parallel theme): But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

**1 Kings 21:19** (Blood): And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

