

# 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 אֲשׁוּק בַּדָּם-נֶפֶשׁ אֶד-בּוֹר יָנוּס, adam ashuq bedam-nefesh ad-bor yanus)—אֲשָׁק (ashaq, 'oppressed, burdened') by דָּם (dam, 'blood') of נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, 'soul, life, person') indicates guilt for murder. This one יָנוּס (yanus, 'flees, runs away') to the בּוֹר (bor, 'pit, cistern, grave')—whether execution or death fleeing justice.

**Let no man stay him** (אַל-יִתְמַכּוּ-בּוֹ, al-yitmeku-vo)—the prohibition: none should תְּמַךְ (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

---

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

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

## Study Questions

---

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

---

אָדֹם	עָשׂוּ קַיִ	בְּדָם	לְכָל־	עַד	בִּיֹר	יִנְּסוּ
A man	that doeth violence	to the blood	of any person	H5704	to the pit	shall flee
H120	H6231	H1818	H5315		H953	H5127
אֵל	יִתְמָכוּ	בּוֹ:				
H408	let no man stay	H0				
	H8551					

## Additional Cross-References

---

**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.

