

Proverbs 28:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.

Analysis

Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich—The Hebrew *toḅ* (better) introduces a value comparison central to Proverbs' wisdom: moral integrity (*toḅ*, uprightness/blamelessness) surpasses material wealth gained through *iqqesh* (perversity, moral crookedness).

This proverb directly contradicts worldly values that equate success with riches. The **poor** who maintains covenant faithfulness stands higher in God's economy than the wealthy whose paths are twisted. Jesus echoed this in Luke 16:15: 'That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.' Integrity of *derek* (way, path) matters more than possessions.

Historical Context

Solomon's court saw immense wealth accumulation, but also the temptations to compromise ethics for gain. Ancient Israel's covenant community was repeatedly warned against oppressing the poor to enrich themselves (Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy 15). This proverb reflects the Torah's prioritization of righteousness over riches.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Are there areas where you're tempted to compromise integrity for financial gain or advancement?
2. How does God's valuation of character over wealth challenge contemporary success metrics?
3. What does 'walking in uprightness' look like practically in your vocation or daily decisions?

Interlinear Text

טוֹב	כִּי שֶׁ	הוֹלֵךְ	בְּתָמ ו	מֵעַקֵּשׁ
Better	is the poor	that walketh	in his uprightness	than he that is perverse
H2896	H7326	H1980	H8537	H6141

וּבְדָרְכָיו	וְהוּא עָשִׁיר:
in his ways	though he be rich
H1870	H6223

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:1 (Parallel theme): Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

Proverbs 28:18 (Parallel theme): Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

Proverbs 19:22 (Parallel theme): The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.