

Proverbs 3:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to
morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Analysis

Withholding good when able to give violates justice. The Hebrew 'ba'al' (owner/master) indicates one who has rightful claim. If someone has legitimate need and you have means to help, justice demands you assist. This isn't about unlimited obligation to all needs but about refusing to help when you're able and the need is legitimate. Justice isn't merely avoiding harm but actively doing good when possible.

Historical Context

Mosaic Law required prompt payment of wages (Deuteronomy 24:15) and generosity toward the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-11). Israelite society was structured around mutual care within covenant community. Withholding due assistance violated covenantal obligations and God's character of generosity.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'good' are you withholding from someone who has rightful claim to your help?
2. How does justice include not just avoiding harm but actively doing good when able?
3. In what ways does modern individualism excuse withholding good that biblical community would require?

Interlinear Text

תֹּאמֶר אֶל	לֹכֶד יְמִינֶךָ	לְנִשְׁׁוֹב	וְמִמֶּרְאֶת
H408 Say	H559 not unto thy neighbour	H1980 and come again	H4279 and to tomorrow
	H7453		H7725
אֶתְּנָתַתִּי	כִּי שְׁתִּתְּנַתֶּן		
I will give	when thou hast	H854	
H5414	H3426		

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:13 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

2 Corinthians 8:11 (Parallel theme): Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (Parallel theme): Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (Parallel theme): In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

1 Timothy 6:18 (Parallel theme): That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

2 Corinthians 9:3 (Parallel theme): Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

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