

Proverbs 30:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or
lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Analysis

Lest I be full, and deny thee—The danger of riches: *sābaʿ* (טַבַּע, be full/satisfied) leads to *kāḥash* (כַּחַשׁ, deny/disown). **And say, Who is the LORD?**—Practical atheism, not intellectual denial but functional independence. Israel's history proved this pattern (Deuteronomy 8:12-14, Hosea 13:6). **Or lest I be poor, and steal**—The danger of poverty: *gānab* (גָּנַב, steal) and **take the name of my God in vain** (*tāpaś*, טַפַּשׁ, profane)—desperation leading to sin that dishonors God's reputation.

Both extremes threaten one's testimony. Agur's realism about human weakness before temptation shows wisdom. The prayer acknowledges that circumstances affect sanctification, though they don't excuse sin.

Historical Context

The Israelites' wilderness testing (Deuteronomy 8) proved that prosperity often breeds forgetfulness of God. Conversely, economic desperation drove some to crimes that brought reproach on their faith (Leviticus 19:11-12, linking theft to profaning God's name).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. In what ways does financial security tempt you to live as though you don't need God?
2. How might your response to economic pressure either honor or dishonor God's name before watching unbelievers?
3. What spiritual disciplines help maintain God-dependence whether in plenty or want (Philippians 4:12)?

Interlinear Text

וְפִי	יְהוָה	מִי	וְאָמַר רְתִי	וְכַחֲשֵׁתִי	אֶשְׂבֵּ עַל	פִּי
H6435			H4310		H7646	H6435
	Who is the LORD		thee and say	and deny	Lest I be full	
	H3068		H559	H3584		
אֱלֹהֵי:	שֵׁם	תֶּכֶף שְׁתִּי	וְגָבֹ בְּרִתִּי	אֶרֶשׁ		
	H8034		H8610	H1589	H3423	
of my God	the name	and take	and steal	or lest I be poor		
H430	H8034	H8610	H1589	H3423		

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 13:6 (Parallel theme): According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

Deuteronomy 31:20 (References God): For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

Deuteronomy 32:15 (References God): But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Jeremiah 2:31 (References Lord): O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

Exodus 20:7 (References God): Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Matthew 26:72 (Parallel theme): And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Matthew 26:74 (Parallel theme): Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Joshua 24:27 (References God): And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

Proverbs 29:24 (Parallel theme): Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

Exodus 5:2 (References Lord): And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.