

Proverbs 31:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

Analysis

Lemuel's mother warns: 'Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.' The Hebrew 'chayil' (strength/substance) and 'derek' (ways/paths) refer to energy and life direction. Sexual immorality has destroyed many rulers—think of David, Solomon, and countless others. Reformed theology recognizes sexual sin's particular destructiveness to leaders. Those in authority face unique temptations and their falls have greater consequences. This counsel warns future kings against allowing sexual indulgence to undermine their calling.

Historical Context

Solomon, despite his wisdom, was destroyed by his many wives and concubines who turned his heart from God (1 Kings 11:1-4). His father David's adultery with Bathsheba brought lasting consequences (2 Samuel 12:10-14).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Are you guarding against sexual temptation, especially if you hold positions of leadership?
2. How have you seen sexual immorality destroy leaders and their effectiveness?
3. What safeguards do you need to protect your integrity and calling?

Interlinear Text

לֹתֶחֶת וְתַּתְּמִתְּ | אֶל
H408 Give H5414 מִן־תְּמִתְּ | אֶל
unto women H802 not thy strength H2428 nor thy ways H1870 to that which destroyeth H4229

מֶלֶכִים:
kings
H4428

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 13:26 (Kingdom): Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

Deuteronomy 17:17 (Parallel theme): Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

1 Kings 11:1 (Kingdom): But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;