

Proverbs 31:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

Analysis

The danger: 'Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.' Intoxication leads to forgetting God's law ('torah') and perverting justice ('mishpat'). Those who drink risk corrupting judgment, especially harming the vulnerable ('ani'—afflicted/poor). Reformed theology insists leaders must maintain clear minds to administer justice impartially. Substance abuse makes this impossible. This verse connects personal sobriety with public justice—self-control enables serving others righteously.

Historical Context

Ancient judges and kings who drank risked taking bribes, showing partiality, or simply making poor decisions that harmed the vulnerable who depended on their just rulings for protection.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does personal discipline (or lack thereof) affect your ability to serve others justly?
2. Are there habits undermining your effectiveness in serving the vulnerable?
3. What connection do you see between self-control and ability to execute justice?

Interlinear Text

פָּן	! שְׁתֶּה	וְיִשְׁכַּח	מִחֻקֵּי קַ	וְיִשְׁבֹּה	דָּ יוֹן	כָּל
H6435	Lest they drink	and forget	the law	and pervert	the judgment	H3605
	H8354	H7911	H2710	H8138	H1779	
	בְּנֵי	עָנִי:				
	of any of the afflicted	H6040				
	H1121					

Additional Cross-References

Habakkuk 2:5 (Parallel theme): Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: