

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

כִּי יִשְׁבְּה֣ אֶת שְׁתָתָה֙ מִשְׁכְּנ֣ עַל מִשְׁכָּנ֣ תְּמִימָה֙
H6435 Lest they drink and forget the law and pervert the judgment H3605
H8354 H7911 H2710 H8138 H1779
בְּתִי עֲתִים
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:

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org