

Proverbs 4:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

Analysis

The wicked eat wickedness like bread and drink violence like wine - it sustains them. The Hebrew 'lechem' (bread) and 'yayin' (wine) are basic sustenance. What should horrify them has become their nourishment. Moral inversion is complete: they feast on what should starve them. This illustrates total depravity - not that humans are as evil as possible, but that sin pervades every aspect of life when given full reign.

Historical Context

Amos 6:12-13 condemned Israel for turning 'judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock...which rejoice in a thing of nought.' Moral corruption inverts values so completely that evil becomes good. Romans 1:28-32 describes similar progression where people not only do evil but 'have pleasure in them that do them.'

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What cultural evils have become so normalized they no longer shock or disturb?
2. How can Christians maintain moral sensitivity in cultures that celebrate wickedness?
3. What practices help you 'taste and see that the LORD is good' rather than acquiring taste for evil?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	לְקַמּוֹן	לְקַם	לְשָׁעָן	וְיִרְאָה	וְיִמְשָׁלֵךְ	וְיִשְׁתַּחַווּ
H3588	For they eat	the bread	of wickedness	the wine	of violence	and drink

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 14:4 (Parallel theme): Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.

Micah 6:12 (Parallel theme): For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

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