

Proverbs 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

Analysis

Solomon warns against cosigning debts or becoming surety for another's obligations. This proverb addresses the Reformed principle of stewardship—God's sovereignty extends to our financial decisions. The Hebrew word 'arab' (become surety) implies pledging oneself as collateral. While Christian charity is virtuous, unwise financial entanglements can undermine our ability to serve God and family. This reflects the biblical balance between generosity and prudent stewardship.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel, debt slavery was common when obligations couldn't be met. Becoming surety for a neighbor's debt could result in losing one's freedom and property, making this warning particularly urgent in that socioeconomic context.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do you balance Christian generosity with financial wisdom in helping others?

2. What safeguards have you established to ensure your financial decisions honor God's sovereignty?
3. In what ways might unwise financial commitments hinder your service to God?

Interlinear Text

בִּי נִי	אִם	עַבְדְּ בִתְּךָ	לְרֵעֵךְ בִּי	תִּקַּח עִתְּךָ	לְאִישׁ זָר
My son	H518	if thou be surety	for thy friend	if thou hast stricken	with a stranger
H1121		H6148	H7453	H8628	H2114
כַּפְּיָךְ:					
thy hand					
H3709					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:18 (Parallel theme): A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

Proverbs 22:26 (Parallel theme): Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

Proverbs 11:15 (Parallel theme): He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

Proverbs 20:16 (Parallel theme): Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

Hebrews 7:22 (Parallel theme): By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Job 17:3 (Parallel theme): Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

Proverbs 27:13 (Parallel theme): Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.

Genesis 43:9 (Parallel theme): I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:

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