

Proverbs 6:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

Analysis

People don't despise a thief if he steals to satisfy hunger when starving. This verse introduces a comparison: even theft for survival, while still wrong, is somewhat understandable. The Hebrew 'buwz' (despise/hold in contempt) indicates that starving thief evokes some sympathy. The logic prepares for v.32's contrast: adultery lacks even this mitigating circumstance. It's not driven by necessity but by folly.

Historical Context

Ancient legal codes, including Mosaic Law, distinguished between theft from need versus theft from greed. Exodus 22:1-15 prescribed restitution for theft but recognized circumstances matter. Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* embodies this principle - stealing bread for starving family evokes sympathy. But adultery has no such mitigating factor; it's pure moral failure.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding context and circumstance affect your moral evaluation of others' sins?
2. What sins do you commit that lack even the 'excuse' of necessity or hunger?
3. How should awareness that your sins are inexcusable (unlike theft from hunger) affect repentance?

Interlinear Text

כִּי גַּם־פָּשׁוּ לְמַלְאָה יְגַנֵּן וּבְכִּי לְגַנְבָּה
H3808 Men do not despise H936 a thief H3588 if he steal H1589 to satisfy H4390 his soul H3588

רִעָבָה!

when he is hungry

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