

# How does food control people? (28:21)

To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

*To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress. KJV - Proverbs 28:21*

## INTRODUCTION



Money talks and stomachs listen.

People can be bought—and it may take very little. The desperate can be easily influenced. **A piece of bread** is paltry, but it really represents all “gifts.” If **a man will transgress** for a piece of bread imagine what he would do for a new car or a new house.

The rich have great power over others.



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## COMMENTARY

We are controlled by our stomachs and appetites more than we like to think! This is why asking God to supply our daily bread is very important—even though it may not seem that we need it, since others are offering it to us. Contentment is protection.

### Dangerous Dependence



If we become dependent on others for our food, they will soon influence our behaviour. Yet we proudly deny this statement. We confidently declare our freedom from such simplistic base dependencies. To think that those who feed us also control us is demeaning to the human spirit! Indeed, but the Bible says this is true. He who pays the piper calls the tune.

The downfall of the human race came at this very point. Adam and Eve sinned over craving the benefits of new but forbidden food (Genesis 2:16-17, 3:6). Jesus' first temptation related to food. The difference was that the first Adam was governed by his own appetite, the last Adam by his relationship with God. The benefits of bread are very short-term when compared to the long-term harm of being a transgressor. Transgression results in death.

### Look to our Maker

The question is: From whom do we seek our needs? Once we start looking to mere mortals, whether it's a government or wealthy individuals, our focus is off God our creator. We become vulnerable to persuasions not rooted in God Himself. God is always reliable. Human beings are deeply and fundamentally flawed (Mark 7:20-24). All human beings can be bribed. Therefore in prayer ask God to provide all our needs, even if others (e.g. government handouts) are prepared to do so.

### Classic Comments

Matthew Poole:

When a man hath once vitiated his conscience, and accustomed himself to take bribes, a very



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small advantage will make him sell justice, and his own soul into the bargain. The design of the proverb is to warn men to take heed of the beginnings of that sin, and consequently of other sins.

John Gill:

In courts of judicature, to give a cause or pass sentence in favour of a person, because he is rich, or is a relation, a friend, an acquaintance, or has done a kindness; and against another, because of the reverse, ( Leviticus 19:15 ) ( Deuteronomy 16:19 ) ; nor in religious assemblies, making a difference between the rich and the poor, ( James 2:1 James 2:2 ) ; this is not good in itself, nor productive of good effects, and cannot be well pleasing to God, who himself is no respecter of persons.

For for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress; the laws of God and men; having used himself to such unrighteous methods of proceeding, he will do any base action for a small gain, he will stick at nothing, and do it for anything; as Cato used to say of M. Coelius the tribune, ``that he might be hired, for a morsel of bread, to speak or hold his peace;" see ( Ezekiel 13:19 ) .

## Don't Trust the Wrong Person

If we begin to treat people differently based on their financial status, then we are making ourselves controllable by them. We should not be impressed with rich people or treat them with more respect. Again, contentment is protection against those who use wealth as a lure to sin.

## Larger Than Its Context

The words "for a piece of bread a man will transgress" describe a *major* human weakness - we are more stomach driven than we care to admit. The Bible speaks of many instances where sin begins with the abuse of food: These include:

1. As the first human transgression Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. They did not eat from physical hunger since they had all the food they would ever need from the other trees. They ate from this forbidden tree likely from a desire to be "like God", self-exaltation and pride. Yet physical food was the "bait" or the medium to rebellion (Genesis 3:6)
2. Esau, the brother of Jacob, despised his birthright as he traded it to his brother for some bread and lentil stew (Genesis 25:34). This lack of self-control cost Esau dearly.
3. The Israelis hated eating manna while wandering so long (through their own fault) in the desert (Numbers 21:5).



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4. Delicious roasts were used as bait to get the Israeli men to party with the Moabite women and later to marry some of them in direct disobedience to God (Numbers 25:1).

5. An unnamed prophet in northern Israel worked a great public miracle and yet was killed by God because he ate too soon (1 Kings 13:11-25).

6. An wicked woman seduced a foolish young man with the prospect of a fine meal. Her peace offerings, which should have been offered in reverence to God, instead became sacrilegious sacrifices for her sexual pleasure (Proverbs 7:10-13).

7. We are warned to eat circumspectly especially when with rulers (Proverbs 23:1-3) or with those who are rich but stingy (Proverbs 23:6-8).

8. We should ask God for our optimal amount of daily food - not too little nor too much. If we have too much we can forget God and if we have too little we can dishonour God (Proverbs 30:7-9).

9. Jesus told us to pray to God asking "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Such prayer deepens our relationship with God and less vulnerable to others.

10. Jesus warns us not to be controlled by our craving for physical food, but to be most eager to be spiritually well nourished (Matthew 6:32-33, John 6:27).

The Bible has much more to say about the importance of keeping our physical appetites under proper spiritual control.

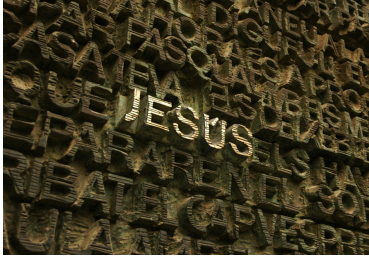


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## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND



One of the most striking characteristics of Jesus was His impartiality.

Jesus trusted no human being because He understood our inherent unreliability. He trusted God alone (John 2:24-25). Even His enemies said about Him in Matthew 22:16, “Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for you are not partial to any.” Jesus was not a mere mortal.

When He refused to turn the stones into bread, Jesus put His confidence in the Bible ahead of His physical life. Later God sent angels to give Him His physical needs (Matthew 4:11).

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Don’t let yourself get into a financial situation where you can be bought.
- Don’t view human nature through rose-coloured lenses. Recognize that people are easily influenced through financial gifts—for good or evil.
- Beware of becoming dependent on others rather than God. By asking God to supply your daily bread, you will not become vulnerable to lesser “bread suppliers.”

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take first? Ask Him.



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## KEY WORDS

bread, bribe, contentment, dishonesty, good, greed, honesty, more assets (quantity), respect, transgression, bf spending

## ILLUSTRATION

### Who is Prudent Pauline?



Prudent Pauline is a planner. She looks before she leaps, she thinks before she speaks. Her favourite mottos are: "Haste makes waste," "brains over brawn," and "don't jump to conclusions."

When Pauline first heard that famous maxim: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step," she said NO! It begins with a good map. The map must be studied and the best route plotted. Consider road conditions, terrain, rest stops, refuelling, hostile territory, expected weather, travelling companions, clothing, supplies, and many more factors, including (if necessary) a guide.

She has studied the wisdom of Solomon and even helped teach him a thing or two. Solomon wrote these words about 3,000 years ago in honour of Prudent Pauline. "Whatever your hand finds to do (no matter what you are doing) do it with all your might (give it your full ability and energy) for there is no activity or planning or wisdom after you die—it will be too late." Pauline says, "First comes wisdom, then comes planning (her favourite activity), and then comes activity."

Pauline makes the time to do tax planning. She does a work plan every day. She uses a day

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timer or planner to assign priorities to her activities. She and Diligent Daniel are an incredible pair. Pauline does all her homework before she starts an activity.

