

# Ecclesiastes 11:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

## Analysis

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**He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap**—the Hebrew *shomer ruach lo yizra ve-ro'eh ba-avim lo yiktzor* (שֹׁמֵר רוּחַ לֹא יִזְרָע וְרֹאֶה בָּעֲבִים לֹא יִקְצֹר) warns against over-caution that leads to paralysis. Ancient farmers needed favorable conditions—calm winds for sowing seed, dry weather for harvest. But waiting for perfect conditions guaranteed inaction, since perfect weather never comes.

This verse counters verse 3's potential misreading. Yes, some factors are beyond control (rain falls, trees fall), but don't let awareness of uncontrollable risks paralyze wise action. The farmer who obsesses over wind direction never plants; the one who fears every cloud never harvests. Both starve from excessive caution. Wisdom requires acting despite uncertainty and risk. Proverbs 20:4 makes similar point: "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest." Jesus warned against the servant who buried his talent in fearful inaction (Matthew 25:24-30).

## Historical Context

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Palestinian agriculture involved real risks—strong winds could scatter seed wastefully, and rain during harvest could ruin grain. Farmers needed wisdom to choose appropriate times for sowing and reaping. But those who demanded perfect conditions never acted—there's always some wind, always potential rain. The verse teaches that productive living requires accepting calculated risks rather

than demanding guaranteed outcomes. This wisdom applies universally: the entrepreneur who waits for perfect market conditions never starts a business; the minister who waits for perfect spiritual readiness never evangelizes; the couple who waits for perfect circumstances never has children. Faith requires acting wisely despite uncertainty, trusting God's providence (Proverbs 16:9, 19:21).

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. What productive actions—spiritual, vocational, or relational—have you avoided because conditions aren't perfect, and how is this verse challenging your excessive caution?
2. How can you distinguish between wise prudence (proper preparation and timing) and faithless paralysis (demanding certainty before acting)?

## Interlinear Text

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שֶׁמֶר	ר וּמִ	ל א	יִזְבֵּעַ	וְרֹאֵה	בְּעָבִימ
He that observeth	the wind	H3808	shall not sow	and he that regardeth	the clouds
H8104	H7307		H2232	H7200	H5645
ל א	יִקְצֹר:				
H3808	shall not reap				
	H7114				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 20:4** (Parallel theme): The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

**Proverbs 3:27** (Parallel theme): Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

**Proverbs 22:13** (Parallel theme): The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

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