

Proverbs 10:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Analysis

This beloved proverb contrasts hate and love: 'Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.' Hatred actively stirs up conflicts, constantly picking fights and nursing grievances. Love, conversely, covers sins—not by ignoring or enabling them but by extending grace rather than revenge. This verse is quoted in 1 Peter 4:8: 'above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.' Love doesn't gossip about offenses or keep records of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5); instead, it forgives and reconciles.

Historical Context

In ancient honor-shame cultures, public exposure of wrongs demanded vengeance to restore honor. The principle of covering sins with love countered this cultural norm, calling for forgiveness over retaliation. This reflected God's own character in covering sin through atonement and extended His covenant love (hesed) as a model for human relationships.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Are you 'stirring up strifes' through grudges, gossip, or score-keeping, or are you covering offenses with love?
2. How does understanding love as covering sins (rather than exposing them) change your response to being wronged?

Interlinear Text

שִׂנְאָה	תְּעִיר ר	מִדִּין ים	וְעַל	כָּל	כָּל שְׂעֵי ים	תִּכְסֶּה	אֲהַבָּה:
Hatred	stirreth up	strifes	H5921	H3605	all sins	covereth	but love
H8135	H5782	H4090			H6588	H3680	H160

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 4:8 (Love): And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Proverbs 17:9 (Love): He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Proverbs 15:18 (Parallel theme): A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

James 5:20 (Sin): Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

James 4:1 (Parallel theme): From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Proverbs 28:25 (Parallel theme): He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

Proverbs 16:27 (Parallel theme): An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.

Proverbs 29:22 (Sin): An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

