

Proverbs 10:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

Analysis

The Hebrew 'rab' (multitude) of words inevitably leads to sin, whether through gossip, lying, or foolish speech. This proverb recognizes the fundamental connection between verbal excess and moral failure, emphasizing that wisdom lies in restraint rather than eloquence. The one who 'refraineth' (Hebrew 'chasak') his lips exercises self-control, one of wisdom's key virtues.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel's oral culture, speech held tremendous power for blessing or cursing, building up or destroying. Solomon, known for his wisdom in judgment and diplomacy, understood that careful speech distinguished the wise from the foolish.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does this proverb challenge modern culture's emphasis on self-expression and 'speaking your truth'?

2. In what situations are you most tempted to speak excessively rather than exercising restraint?

Interlinear Text

בְּרֹב	דְּבָרִים	לֹא	יִחְדָּל	כִּשְׁעַ	וְחֹשֶׁךְ
In the multitude	of words	H3808	there wanteth	not sin	but he that refraineth
H7230	H1697		H2308	H6588	H2820

מִשְׁפָּלִי:	שִׁפְתָּי
is wise	his lips
H7919	H8193

Additional Cross-References

James 3:2 (Word): For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

James 1:19 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Psalms 39:1 (Sin): I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 (Word): For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.