

Proverbs 10:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

Analysis

Agricultural Wisdom: This proverb uses farming imagery to contrast wisdom and folly. The Hebrew אָגָר בְּקָרִים (oger baqqayits, "gathers in summer") describes someone who works during the optimal harvest season, while נִרְדָּם בְּקָרִים (nirdam baqqatsir, "sleeps in harvest") depicts negligence at the crucial moment. **Seasonal Urgency:** In ancient Israel's agricultural economy, missing the harvest window meant disaster. Summer was the brief period for gathering grain before autumn rains; harvest required intense, immediate labor.

The contrast is not just between work and laziness but between wise timing and foolish neglect of opportunity. **Family Honor:** The phrase "a son that causeth shame" (Hebrew בֶּן מְבִישׁ, ben mevish) indicates that individual folly affects the whole family. **Wisdom Literature Pattern:** Proverbs 10-15 contains primarily antithetical parallelism, where the second line contrasts with the first. This literary structure reinforces moral choices: wisdom vs. folly, diligence vs. sloth, honor vs. shame.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite Agriculture: The agricultural calendar was central to Israelite life and religious observance. Barley harvest began in April-May, wheat harvest followed in May-June, and summer fruits (grapes, figs, olives) were gathered June-September. Missing these critical harvest periods meant a year of hunger.

Wisdom Literature Context: Proverbs reflects Solomon's era (10th century BC) when Israel experienced prosperity and international trade. The book's practical wisdom addressed urban and rural life, with many proverbs using agricultural imagery familiar to all social classes. The emphasis on diligence and wise timing reflects values essential for survival in an agrarian economy, while teaching broader principles applicable to all of life.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the agricultural imagery of gathering in summer versus sleeping in harvest apply to spiritual opportunities and responsibilities?
2. What does this proverb teach about the relationship between wisdom, timing, and diligence?
3. Why does individual folly (sleeping during harvest) bring shame upon the whole family rather than just the individual?
4. How can believers discern their "harvest seasons"—times of critical opportunity requiring immediate action?
5. What modern applications of this proverb exist beyond agricultural contexts (education, career, spiritual growth)?

Interlinear Text

אָגָר	בְּ קָצֵן	בְּ	בְּ מִשְׁכָּן	בְּ נִשְׁתָּן	בְּ קָצֵן
He that gathereth	in summer	is a son	is a wise	but he that sleepeth	in harvest
H103	H7019	H1121	H7919	H7290	H7105
בְּ	מִבְּשָׁחָה:				
is a son	that causeth shame				
H1121	H954				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 6:8 (Parallel theme): Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 30:25 (Parallel theme): The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

Proverbs 17:2 (Parallel theme): A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

Proverbs 19:26 (Parallel theme): He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.

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