

Proverbs 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

Analysis

He that is void of wisdom despises his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his peace. Lacking wisdom produces contempt toward neighbors - foolish persons disparage others. The understanding person remains silent rather than expressing contempt. This verse connects wisdom with charity - genuine understanding produces patience with others' faults. Contempt reveals both intellectual and moral deficiency.

Historical Context

Covenant community ethics required loving neighbors (Lev 19:18). Despising neighbors violated this command, revealing lack of true wisdom rooted in fear of God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What contempt toward others reveals lack of wisdom in your life?
2. How can you practice wise silence rather than expressing disparaging opinions?

Interlinear Text

בָּז	לְרֵעֵהוּ	חֲסֵר	לִב	וְאִישׁ	תְּבוֹנ וְת
despiseth	his neighbour	He that is void	of wisdom	but a man	of understanding
H936	H7453	H2638	H3820	H376	H8394
יִחְרֹשׁ:					
holdeth his peace					
H2790					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:19 (Parallel theme): In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

1 Peter 2:23 (Parallel theme): Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Luke 16:14 (Parallel theme): And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Luke 18:9 (Parallel theme): And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Proverbs 14:21 (Parallel theme): He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.