

Proverbs 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

Analysis

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean, but much increase is by the strength of the ox. Without livestock, the barn stays tidy but produces no crops. Productive work creates mess but yields increase. This verse observes that fruitfulness requires accepting inconvenience. The choice: sterile tidiness or messy productivity. Applied broadly: ministry, parenting, business - all productive endeavors create disorder while producing fruit.

Historical Context

Agricultural imagery: oxen were essential for plowing and threshing but required feeding, cleaning, and care. The work they enabled far exceeded the burden they created.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What 'messes' are you avoiding that would actually produce fruitfulness?
2. How does fear of inconvenience keep you from productivity God desires?

Interlinear Text

וְבַא יְאֵן אֶלְפִּים אֶבְיָס	וְרַב יְמִינָה יְמִינָה	וְתַּבְאֵן וְתַּאֲגַד
H369 Where no oxen	H18 are the crib	H1249 is clean
H504		H7230 but much
		H8393 increase

שׂוֹר: בְּכָל		
is by the strength	of the ox	
H3581	H7794	

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 13:23 (Parallel theme): Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

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