

Proverbs 15:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Analysis

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Modest meal with love beats lavish feast with hatred. This 'better than' saying subordinates material abundance to relational harmony. The 'stalled ox' represents expensive feast; 'dinner of herbs' represents simple vegetables. Yet love makes poverty rich; hatred makes wealth miserable. Relationships matter more than resources.

Historical Context

Reflects agricultural society where meat was expensive luxury, vegetables daily fare. Yet the proverb insists that relational quality exceeds dietary quality in importance.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Are you sacrificing relational harmony for material abundance?
2. How can you prioritize love over luxury in your household decisions?

Interlinear Text

טוֹב	אֶרְחָם	תְּרֵקָה	וְאַהֲבָה	שָׁמֶר	אֶבֶס	אֶבֶס
Better	is a dinner	of herbs	where love	H8033	ox	is than a stalled
H2896	H737	H3419	H160		H7794	H75
	וְשִׁנְאָה	בֹּי:				
	and hatred	H0				
	H8135					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:1 (Parallel theme): Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

Proverbs 21:19 (Parallel theme): It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.