

Proverbs 16:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

Analysis

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. Tsuf-devash imrey-no'am (צוף־דבֿש אִמְרֵי־נֹעַם, a honeycomb—pleasant words). Matoq lanefesh umarpe la'etsem (מתוק לנֶפֶשׁ וּמֵרַפָּא לְעֵצֶם, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones). Pleasant words provide both emotional sweetness and physical health. The proverb celebrates gracious communication's power to bless others profoundly. Believers' speech should minister grace (Ephesians 4:29), providing sweet encouragement and healing comfort through Spirit-empowered words.

Historical Context

Honey was ancient Israel's primary sweetener and medicine (Proverbs 24:13, 25:16). Pleasant words had similar dual benefit—delighting and healing. In harsh ancient life, kind words brought genuine comfort. David's psalms, Solomon's wisdom, prophets' comfort messages all exemplified this. Jesus spoke gracious words (Luke 4:22). Christian speech should be gracious, seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6)—sweet yet preserving truth.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Do your words function like honeycomb—sweet and healing—or like poison and pain to others?
2. How can you intentionally speak pleasant, encouraging words that minister grace to hearers?
3. What is the balance between pleasant words and hard truths, and how did Jesus model this?

Interlinear Text

צוֹרֶה	וּמִרְפֵּי אֶל נֶפֶשׁ מֵת וּקְנֵי עֵם אֲמָרֵי יְדֵי בֶשֶׂת
are as an honeycomb	H1706 words Pleasant sweet to the soul and health
H6688	H561 H5278 H4966 H5315 H4832
לְעֵצָם:	
to the bones	
H6106	

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 12:18 (Word): There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Proverbs 4:22 (Parallel theme): For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

Proverbs 3:8 (Parallel theme): It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

Proverbs 23:16 (Parallel theme): Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

Psalms 119:103 (Word): How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 19:10 (Parallel theme): More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Proverbs 27:9 (Parallel theme): Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Proverbs 15:26 (Word): The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

Jeremiah 15:16 (Word): Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Deuteronomy 32:2 (Parallel theme): My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

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