

Proverbs 17:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Analysis

Love covers offenses rather than exposing them, promoting reconciliation over vindication. The contrast shows that repeating matters separates friends—gossip and grudge-bearing destroy relationships. This anticipates 1 Peter 4:8's teaching that love covers a multitude of sins through forgiveness.

Historical Context

Honor-shame cultures made public exposure devastating to reputation. Covering offenses demonstrated mercy and preserved social bonds essential for community functioning.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you respond to others' offenses: covering in love or exposing to others?
2. What relationships need restoration through your choice to cover rather than repeat offenses?

Interlinear Text

מְכֹרֶה	שָׁעַ	שְׁאֵלָה	אֶחָד	וְשַׁתְּהַ
He that covereth	a transgression	seeketh	love	but he that repeateth
H3680	H6588	H1245	H160	H8138
אַלְפִּיָּה	מִפְרָאֵד	בְּדָבָר		
a matter	separateth	very friends		
H1697	H6504	H441		

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 10:12 (Love): Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

1 Peter 4:8 (Love): And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Proverbs 16:28 (Parallel theme): A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Psalms 32:1 (Sin): Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.