

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

הַמְכַסֶּה	כִּי שָׁעַ	מִבֶּקֶשׁ שׁ	אֲהַבֶּה ה	וְשׁוֹן ה
He that covereth	a transgression	seeketh	love	but he that repeateth
H3680	H6588	H1245	H160	H8138
אֵלֹהִים:	מִפְּרִיד	בְּדָבָר		
	separateth	a matter		
	H6504	H1697		
		very friends		
		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.