

Proverbs 21:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom
strong wrath.

Analysis

A well-timed secret gift can pacify anger and avert wrath. 'Gift in secret' and 'reward in the bosom' both suggest discreet generosity that allows the offended party to save face without public capitulation. This isn't bribery but wise peacemaking through humble generosity. Sometimes conflicts escalate due to pride; a gracious gift can defuse tension by demonstrating good will. The principle recognizes human nature's responsiveness to kindness. However, this must be distinguished from bribing judges or purchasing injustice—the context is personal reconciliation, not corrupting justice. Believers should be creatively proactive in pursuing peace, using resources wisely to heal relationships and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Historical Context

Gift-giving was central to ancient Near Eastern diplomacy and relationship maintenance. Jacob's gifts to Esau exemplify using generosity to pursue peace with an estranged brother.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Are you willing to pursue peace proactively through humble generosity?
2. How can you use resources to heal relationships rather than merely assert your rights?

Interlinear Text

מַתָּךְ	בְּ סְתִּיר	יְכַפֵּה	אֵרֶץ	וְשָׁפֵד	בְּ קֶרֶב	חַמְתָּה	עָזָה:
A gift	in secret	pacifieth	anger	and a reward	in the bosom	wrath	strong
H4976	H5643	H3711	H639	H7810	H2436	H2534	H5794

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 18:16 (Parallel theme): A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

Proverbs 19:6 (Parallel theme): Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.