

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

עֲזָה:	חַמָּה	בִּי	קִי	וְשֶׁחַד	אֵרָא	יִכָּפֶה	בְּסֵתֶר	מִתְּ
strong	wrath	in the bosom	and a reward	anger	pacifieth	in secret	A gift	
H5794	H2534	H2436	H7810	H639	H3711	H5643	H4976	

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.