

Proverbs 21:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Analysis

Better to dwell alone in the wilderness than with a 'contentious and angry' wife. The severity of this comparison emphasizes how unbearable constant strife makes a home. The wilderness represents isolation, hardship, and danger—yet even this is preferable to domestic warfare. A peaceful solitude surpasses companionship characterized by anger and contention. This hyperbolic comparison aims to prevent such marriages (by warning men to seek godly wives) and to correct contentious wives (by showing how their behavior destroys the home). The principle applies mutually: either spouse's habitual anger and strife makes marriage miserable. Believers must cultivate gentleness, patience, and self-control to create peaceful homes that glorify God.

Historical Context

Divorce in ancient Israel was permitted for serious issues, but the ideal was lifelong covenant faithfulness. This proverb doesn't encourage divorce but warns against making marriage unbearable through constant strife.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. If married, are you cultivating peace or generating conflict in your home?
2. If unmarried, are you prioritizing godly character when considering a spouse?

Interlinear Text

מִלְתָּג יְמִינָה שָׁתְּמִילָה מִלְתָּג יְמִינָה
It is better to dwell in the wilderness woman
H2896 H3427 H776 H4057 H802 H4066

וְבַת־בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁבָתָה טַבָּה

and an angry

H3708

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 21:9 (Parallel theme): It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

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