

Proverbs 21:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

Analysis

Living in a 'corner of the housetop' (exposed roof corner) is better than sharing a house with a 'brawling woman.' The Hebrew 'midyan' (brawling/contentious) describes constant quarreling. This hyperbolic comparison emphasizes how unbearable contentious companionship is—better to be uncomfortable and alone than comfortable and in conflict. Reformed theology values peace and gentle speech, especially in marriage. While applied here to wives, the principle applies to all relationships. Constant contention destroys fellowship and makes even pleasant surroundings miserable.

Historical Context

Flat roofs were common in ancient Palestine, used for various purposes. A 'corner of the housetop' would be exposed to weather and uncomfortable, yet preferable to indoor strife.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Are you a source of peace or contention in your relationships?
2. How can spouses cultivate gentle, peaceable communication rather than constant quarreling?
3. What does this proverb teach about the priority of relational harmony over physical comfort?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|------------------------|-------|---------|--------------|------|
| מֵאַת | שָׁתָת | גַּג | בָּתָה | לִשְׁבַּת | עַל | פָּנִית | סְבִּת | וּבָ |
| It is better | to dwell | H5921 | in a corner | of the housetop | | | woman | |
| H2896 | H3427 | | H6438 | | H1406 | | H802 | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| בָּתָה | מִלְּדִינָה | בָּתָה | מִלְּדִינָה | בָּתָה | מִלְּדִינָה |
| than with a brawling | house | in a wide | | | |
| H4079 | H1004 | H2267 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:13 (Parallel theme): A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.

Proverbs 25:24 (Parallel theme): It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.

Proverbs 21:19 (Parallel theme): It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Proverbs 12:4 (Parallel theme): A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

Proverbs 15:17 (Parallel theme): Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Proverbs 17:1 (Parallel theme): Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

