

Proverbs 25:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

Analysis

By patience a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks bones. The Hebrew 'erekh aph' (long of nostrils/patient) and 'lashon rakah' (soft/gentle tongue) versus 'shavar etsem' (break bone) creates striking contrast. Gentle persistence accomplishes what force cannot. Patience and gentleness persuade even resistant authority. The bone-breaking imagery: soft tongue achieves what seems impossible - breaking hardest substance through gentle persistence. Wisdom uses gentle persistence, not angry force.

Historical Context

Throughout Scripture, gentle persuasion proves more effective than force. Abigail's gentle speech turned David from vengeful murder (1 Samuel 25). Esther's patient diplomacy saved her people (Esther 4-7). Proverbs 15:1 teaches: 'A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.' Jesus embodied this: 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break' (Isaiah 42:2-3).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What situations in your life require patient gentle persuasion rather than forceful demands?
2. How can you cultivate patience and gentleness when facing resistant authority or hard hearts?
3. What 'bones' (hard resistant situations) might gentle persistence eventually break?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵרֶךְ	אֶפְיָם	יִפְתָּהּ	קֶצֶץ	וּלְשׁוֹן	כִּזְהָ	תִּשְׁבֶּר
By long	forbearing	persuaded	is a prince	tongue	and a soft	breaketh
H753	H639	H6601	H7101	H3956	H7390	H7665

גֵּרֶם:
the bone
H1634

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 15:1 (Parallel theme): A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Ecclesiastes 10:4 (Parallel theme): If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

Proverbs 16:14 (Parallel theme): The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.