

Proverbs 25:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

Analysis

A man bearing false witness against his neighbor is like a club, sword, or sharp arrow. The Hebrew 'ed sheqer' (false witness) and weapons imagery emphasize destructive power. False testimony devastates like physical weapons. Lies injure profoundly - destroying reputations, relationships, lives. The ninth commandment ('Thou shalt not bear false witness') protects against this violence. Speech can wound as deeply as weapons; truthfulness is moral imperative.

Historical Context

Mosaic Law severely punished false witness - false accuser received penalty his testimony would have brought on accused (Deuteronomy 19:16-21). Naboth's murder by false testimony (1 Kings 21) illustrates this sin's devastation. Jesus faced false witnesses at trial (Matthew 26:59-61). James 3:6 describes tongue as 'fire, a world of iniquity...it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.'

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What false or misleading statements have you made that wounded others?
2. How can you ensure your testimony and speech are truthful, not weaponized?
3. What reputational damage might require making amends for past false witness?

Interlinear Text

מַפֵּי יָז	וְחֶרֶב	וְחֶץ	שָׁנִי וְזָרָה	אִישׁ	עֹנֵה
is a maul	and a sword	arrow	and a sharp	A man	that beareth
H4650	H2719	H2671	H8150	H376	H6030
בְּרֵעֵהוּ	עֵד	שָׁקֶר:			
against his neighbour	witness	false			
H7453	H5707	H8267			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 57:4 (Word): My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Proverbs 12:18 (Word): There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

Jeremiah 9:8 (Parallel theme): Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

James 3:6 (Parallel theme): And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Jeremiah 9:3 (Parallel theme): And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD.

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