

Proverbs 25:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.

Analysis

The north wind brings forth rain; a backbiting tongue brings angry looks. The Hebrew 'chuwl' (brings forth/births) and 'ragan' (whisper/slander) describes gossip's inevitable consequences. Meteorological observation becomes moral lesson: gossip produces anger as surely as north wind produces rain. Cause-effect relationship is predictable. If you gossip, expect angry response when discovered. Slander breeds anger; truthful speech builds trust.

Historical Context

Proverbs repeatedly condemns gossip and slander (11:13, 16:28, 18:8, 20:19, 26:20-22). Ancient communities' closeness made gossip especially destructive. James 3:5-6 describes tongue's destructive power: 'Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.' Modern social media exponentially amplifies gossip's reach and damage. Wisdom requires guarding speech carefully.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What gossip or backbiting speech have you engaged in, and what angry consequences resulted?
2. How can you cultivate speech patterns that build trust rather than breeding anger?
3. What accountability would help you avoid backbiting and slander?

Interlinear Text

רוּחַ	צָפוֹן	תָּח וּלְלָ	גֶּשֶׁם	וּפָנִים	נִזְעֵמָה	לִשׁוֹן
wind	The north	driveth away	rain	countenance	so doth an angry	tongue
H7307	H6828	H2342	H1653	H6440	H2194	H3956

סִתְּרָה:

a backbiting
H5643

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 15:3 (Parallel theme): He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Job 37:22 (Parallel theme): Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

Proverbs 26:20 (Parallel theme): Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Romans 1:30 (Parallel theme): Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

2 Corinthians 12:20 (Parallel theme): For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not:

lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

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