

Proverbs 27:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.

Analysis

Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind—Attempting to restrain (שָׁפַךְ, **šāpan**, hide/restrain) a contentious woman (v. 15) is like trying to contain wind (רוּאָה, **rûah**)—impossible. **The ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself**—perfume (שְׁמֵן, **shemen**) inevitably reveals its presence; you cannot conceal fragrance. Both metaphors emphasize futility.

This verse acknowledges the limits of human ability to change another person. Only God's Spirit can transform a quarrelsome heart. The New Testament echoes this—husbands are called to love, not to control (Ephesians 5:25), and transformation comes through the Spirit's work (Galatians 5:22-23), not human manipulation.

Historical Context

Wind and perfume were common life experiences in ancient Israel. Wind was proverbially uncontrollable (Ecclesiastes 1:14, 'feeding on wind'). Perfumed oils were valuable commodities whose scent inevitably permeated clothing and surroundings (Song of Solomon 1:3).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Where are you attempting to 'hide the wind' by trying to change or control someone whom only God can transform?
2. How does this proverb's realism about human limitations drive you to prayer rather than manipulation?
3. What does surrendering impossible situations to God's sovereignty look like in your closest relationships?

Interlinear Text

צְפָנָה

Whosoever hideth

H6845

צְפָנָה

Whosoever hideth

H6845

רַקֵּן

the wind

H7307

יְשַׁׁבְּנָה

and the ointment

H8081

יְמִינֵךְ

of his right hand

H3225

בָּרְאָה!

which bewrayeth

H7121

Additional Cross-References

John 12:3 (Parallel theme): Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.