

Proverbs 27:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Open rebuke is better than secret love.

Analysis

Open rebuke is better than 'secret love.' The Hebrew 'ahab satan' (hidden/concealed love) fails to act for the beloved's good. True love corrects and rebukes when necessary (Hebrews 12:6). Love that won't confront sin isn't genuine love but sentimentality or cowardice. Reformed theology values church discipline as a loving act. Faithful wounds from friends exceed kisses from enemies (27:6). This verse corrects modern notions that love means never confronting or disagreeing. Biblical love speaks truth, even when difficult.

Historical Context

Israel's covenant community required mutual accountability. Love expressed through corrective rebuke protected individuals and community from sin's spread. Leviticus 19:17 commands, 'thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.'

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Do you love people enough to rebuke them when necessary, or do you hide behind 'niceness'?

2. How do you receive rebuke from those who love you?
3. What is the relationship between biblical love and truth-telling?

Interlinear Text

מִסְתְּרָתָה מְאֵבֶב הַמְּגַל הַתּוֹכֵחַ טׁ וּבָהּ
is better rebuke Open love than secret
H2896 H8433 H1540 H160 H5641

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 28:23 (Parallel theme): He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

1 Timothy 5:20 (Parallel theme): Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

Galatians 2:14 (Parallel theme): But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Matthew 18:15 (Parallel theme): Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Leviticus 19:17 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.