

Proverbs 30:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

Analysis

Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter (כִּי מִצְּחָלָב יוֹצֵא חֶמְאָה), ki mitz chalav yotzi chem'ah)—מִצְּחָלָב (mitz, 'pressing, churning, squeezing') of חֶלְבָּה (chalav, 'milk') produces יָצָא, yatza) (chem'ah, 'butter, curds'). Natural process: consistent pressure produces desired result.

And the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood (וּמִצְּחָבָב יוֹצֵא דָם), umitz-af yotzi dam)—מִצְּחָבָב (mitz, 'pressing, squeezing') of אַף (af, 'nose, nostril') brings דָם (dam, 'blood'). Violent pressure produces violent result.

So the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife (וּמִצְּחָרֵב אַפְּיִם יוֹצֵא רִיב), umitz appayim yotzi riv)—similarly, מִצְּחָרֵב (mitz appayim, 'pressing/forcing of anger') produces רִיב (riv, 'strife, contention, lawsuit'). Note: נַחַז means both 'nose' and 'anger' (anger 'flares the nostrils'). Nurturing anger, dwelling on grievances, pressing resentment inevitably produces conflict. The lesson: what you press/cultivate determines what emerges. Press milk, get butter; press anger, get strife. Ephesians 4:26-27: 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.'

Historical Context

Ancient dairy production involved churning milk in skins or pottery to separate butter. The physical analogy would be immediately clear to agrarian audiences. The wordplay on נַחַז ('nose' and 'anger') is lost in English but powerful in Hebrew.

Agur's agricultural wisdom applies to emotional and spiritual life: cultivation determines harvest.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What are you 'churning' in your heart—and what will it inevitably produce?
2. Where are you 'forcing wrath' by nurturing grievances rather than releasing them to God?
3. How can you cultivate peace and grace with the same intentionality that produces butter from milk?

Interlinear Text

רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:
strife	strife	strife	strife	strife	strife
H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379

רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:	רִבָּה:
strife	strife	strife	strife	strife	strife
H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379	H7379

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 29:22 (Parallel theme): An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

Proverbs 17:14 (Parallel theme): The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

Proverbs 28:25 (Parallel theme): He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org