

Proverbs 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

Analysis

Let your fountains be dispersed, and rivers of waters in the streets. This likely ironic statement questions whether sexual capacity should be shared promiscuously. The rhetorical answer (v.17) is no - intimacy should be reserved for marriage. The Hebrew 'palash' (dispersed/spread) describes indiscriminate scattering. Sexual energy is precious resource not to be wasted but carefully directed.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern sexual ethics varied widely, but biblical teaching consistently reserved sexual expression for marriage covenant. Unlike surrounding cultures where temple prostitution and casual sexuality were normalized, Israel's God demanded exclusive sexual faithfulness within marriage as reflection of exclusive covenant faithfulness to Yahweh.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does biblical sexual ethics contrast with cultural messages about sexual freedom?
2. What does it mean to 'disperse' versus 'preserve' sexual energy, and why does it matter?
3. How does viewing sexual capacity as precious resource affect your sexual ethics?

Interlinear Text

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|--------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| יָפַּר וְצוֹ | מַעְיִנֶיךָ יְיָ | ח וְצָה | בְּ רְחֹב וְת | פְּלִי | מַיִם: |
| be dispersed | Let thy fountains | abroad | in the streets | and rivers | of waters |
| H6327 | H4599 | H2351 | H7339 | H6388 | H4325 |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 128:3 (Parallel theme): Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

Isaiah 48:21 (Parallel theme): And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.

Psalms 127:3 (Parallel theme): Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Psalms 68:26 (Parallel theme): Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

Genesis 24:60 (Parallel theme): And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Deuteronomy 33:28 (Parallel theme): Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

Judges 12:9 (Parallel theme): And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years.

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