

Quarrelsome Wives

Proverbs 21:9 - “It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.” KJV “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.” NIV -

טוֹב, לְשֵׁב בְּתֵּל פְּנֵית-גָּג-- מֵאֵשׁ תּוֹדִינִים, וּבֵית תְּבָר

The first word we want to consider is **better**. The Hebrew word is *tob*, which has a variety of meanings. It means that something is good in itself, that it has a quality of goodness about it, therefore it has the idea of something that is good for you, therefore it is not only desirable, but also preferable! It is better for one's piece of mind, sanity, and mental and physical health. When used in context with something else, then it has the idea of comparison telling us that it is **better!** “It is **better** to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.”

Now when it says that something is better for you, (therefore **preferable**), it is not making a statement of argument to be used in the war of words going on in the home, nor is it being used as a retaliatory device against the wife. It isn't even being used to get back at the quarrelsome wife! What it's simply saying that **it is to the husband's advantage and benefit, it's better, preferable, for him, to live in a corner on top of the roof, rather than be downstairs with her!** Now if that's saying something else, then the wife needs to consider that.

So how is it to the man's advantage to dwell up there than down in the house? For the doctrinal husband there are three main things that stand out. **One**, is to keep himself from engaging in any OSN related activity; the yelling, screaming, bickering, arguing, and all the rest that goes with arguments. **Two**, so he can protect his soul from the damage done to it by the wife's constant anger and arguments. **Three**, so he can have the peace and tranquility, so he can remove himself from the field of battle, for the purpose that he can live in his own spiritual life!

Now the word for **dwell** is the qal infinitive of *yashab*. *Yashab* had a variety of meanings, to sit, to dwell, to rule, etc., but it meant the place where one resides, or where one lives, as we say. So it's referring to his home or apartment. He's moved to a corner of the roof.

“In a corner of the housetop” is *al-pinnath-gag*, all in construct. The word for **on** is *al* and it denoted that which is above, over, or up, from which we get up on, or upon. So we know that we are talking about a roof, which would be flat in those days. There is no need for pitched roofs, when there is no snow and very little rainfall.

Corner is *pinnah*, which referred to the corner of anything. It denoted the point where the straight of a street, or wall, changes direction with a sharp bend in contrast to a curve. The verb form had the idea of turning, or making a turn.

The word for **roof** is *gag* and it denoted the surface of something, or a roof, which was usually flat. So when one stood on the roof, there would be this one flat surface, but when *pinnah* was found in construct with it, it told us over there in one corner of the roof there was a separate enclosure, or room, all by itself. That would be the *al-pinnath-gag*. In those days many homes had a separate little room up on the roof, where one could get away from the heat at night, and have a place to put up houseguests. You couldn't build one on the sides because of the neighbor's houses abutting yours, nor could one go out in the street, nor in the back, so the only way one could go is **up!**

Typically these rooms were not fancy, but rather spartan. They would have one or two windows, a door, a small cot to sleep on, a table, a chair and a lamp for reading. But they did catch the evening breeze and many a prophet in the OT has stayed in these types of rooms when visiting a city as they ministered for the Lord.

So why would it be better, even preferable for a man to live up in this little dinky room on the roof, rather than enjoy all the space, comfort and luxuries of the main house downstairs? (His own house!) What would drive a man to go live on the roof, instead of being downstairs? Whatever it was it had to be awfully bad for him to abandon what he had bought, and worked so hard to get, to go live there! And the answer is given us in the passage in that **downstairs is an angry, quarrelsome woman!**

Brawling **woman**, or quarrelsome woman, or a contentious woman, is *meesheth midyaniym*. The word for woman, which is also used to denote a wife, is *ishah* with the preposition *min* prefixed to it. *Min* has the idea of from, or away from, showing the idea of separation from something, or the idea of distancing oneself from something, or someone. **He's getting away from a contentious woman!**

Quarrelsome is *midyanim*, derived from *madon*, from the root *diyn*, which had the idea of judging, then from that being judgmental. From there it gets into the world of strife, anger, contentiousness, being argumentative, bitter conflict, etc.. *Diyn* had the idea of two opponents at law both of who are thoroughly convinced that they are in the right! From that point they both argue their case with neither one of them giving ground to the other in their war of words.

From that background *midyanim* developed into a type of wife, or woman, who thinks she's right about everything and argues with her husband on just about everything in the home. Her personal issues deal with such things as having a strong mental attitude of pride, a will that won't bend, often a sense of moral superiority, or being in the right all the time, (the thought she could be wrong doesn't enter into her mind), refusal to submit to authority, a rejection of doctrinal authority, lack of humility, lack of true gentleness, polemic attitude, (wants to fight all the time). And if ever confronted with these issues, she'll argue that she doesn't! Trying to get her to see reason and stop, is like trying to restrain the wind.

Instead of her building up her home into a relaxed, loving, tranquil setting for all who live there, she has turned it into a **battleground**. “*Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*” Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman, *chaqmah*, is the woman who learns and **applies** Bible Doctrine in her home. While the foolish woman, *ivveleth*, is the woman who **doesn't!**

Beth chaber is a **wide house**, that is, a house with many rooms. Most houses in those days were small, but large houses having many rooms would allow for several families to live under one roof. They could also be used for lodging-places and gatherings for fellowship. Then, as today, a large house spoke of money, space and a certain level of luxury above the average man's house.

Now living in a large house with many rooms would tell us that the man had plenty of rooms he could go to get away from the wife and her constant anger, arguing, yelling, contentiousness, harsh words, etc.. But not so, for she would find where he was at and start on him all over again. But if he was up on the roof, **far away from her**, she would not be so inclined to climb the stairs many times a day just to have a go at him. Besides the neighbors could see her true colors in action and she would lose face in the community. And remember, the word here is not to have a place to go to get away from her, but a place where he has now set up his dwelling! He now lives in a little shed on the roof – and it's better!

Proverbs 21:19 - "It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."
KJV "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife." NIV -

טוב, שֶׁבֶת בְּאֶרֶץ-מִדְבָּר -- מֵאִשָּׁת מְדוּנִים (מְדִינִים) וְכָעֵס

We begin again with the definition of **good**, *tob*. *Tob* means that something is good in itself, that it has a quality of goodness about it, therefore it has the idea of something that is **good for you**, therefore it is not only **desirable**, but also **preferable**! It is better for one's piece of mind, sanity, and mental and physical health. When used in context with something else, then it has the idea of comparison telling us that it is **better**! Now when it says that something is better for you, (therefore **preferable**), what it's simply saying that **it is to the husband's advantage and benefit, it's better, preferable, for him, to live in a corner on top of the roof, or out in the desert, rather than to be around her!**

The word for to **dwell** is the qal infinitive of *yashab*. *Yashab* had a variety of meanings, to sit, to dwell, to rule, etc., but it meant the place where one resides, or where one lives, as we say. So it's referring to his home or apartment, or any place one lives.

Now we are leaving the house, (that the man owned and built for his bride to live with him), to go out into the wilderness **to get as far away from her as he can!** The word for **wilderness** is *beerets-midbar* and it brings to mind an whole array of concepts that went with it. *Erets* was the word for the land, or the earth, and *midbar* was the word for an open, uninhabited space. But for those living in the Middle East it referred to the wilderness, or desert.

Used in construct with each other it had the ideas of pasture land, a place where people did not dwell, a place, at best, that was only fit for feeding flocks, a sterile, sandy country, the desert of Arabia, the Sahara desert, semiarid or arid regions, a place of fear and revulsion, scarcity of water, lack of food, no shelter from the elements, wild beasts searching for prey, dangerous men and tribes, horned vipers, spiders, scorpions, flies, sweltering heat, dust storms, howling wilderness. Basically **the last place on earth that you would want to be, let alone live in.**

Forget the house. He can't stand living with her one more day, even if he's moved his place of living up on the roof. To get away from an angry contentious woman, he now is moving out into the desert! Forget the **house!** Heck, forget the **town!!** He's moving away from her as far as he can get, and he knows one thing for sure, he knows she's not going to follow him out there! She'd probably follow him around town, no matter where he lived, but that's one place he knows he can go to get away from her.

The word for **woman** here is again *meesheth*, *ishah* plus the preposition *min*, which means away from, to be totally separated from. He just wants to get away from this woman, even if it means he has to flee to the ends of the earth, or out into the desert as we have here!

The word for **quarrelsome**, or contentious, here is *midwaniym*, instead of *midyaniym*, and it was derived from *madon*, from the root *diyn*, which had the idea of judging, and from that to being judgmental. From there it gets into the world of strife, anger, contentiousness, being argumentative, bitter conflict, etc.. *Diyn* had the idea of two opponents at law both of who are thoroughly convinced that they are in the **right!** From that point they both argue their case with neither one of them giving ground to the other in their war of words. Pride, and a sense of being in the right all the time, plus a form of legalism are the driving forces behind it. Add in anger and a rejection of authority we end up with being contentious.

From that background *midyanim* developed into a type of wife, or woman, who thinks she's right about everything and argues with her husband on just about everything in the home. Her personal issues deal with such things as having a strong mental attitude of pride, a will that won't bend, often a sense of moral superiority, or being in the right all the time, (the thought she could be wrong doesn't enter into her mind), refusal to submit to authority, a rejection of doctrinal authority, lack of humility, lack of true gentleness, polemic attitude, (wants to fight all the time). And if ever confronted with these issues, she'll argue that she doesn't! Trying to get her to see reason and stop, is like trying to restrain the wind.

But now the passage adds another word describing her character, (or lack thereof), and it's the word for **angry**, *ka'as*, or *weka'as*, an angry and contentious woman. **It's vastly preferable to live in an uninhabited, hostile desert far away from an angry and quarrelsome woman!**

Ka'as is associated with bitterness and meant to be angry, easily irritated and covers the ground from inner anger to unbridled rage. It is often referred to as one having a bad temper. The Septuagint translates it as either *thumos*, which denotes an internal anger, or *orge*, a more pronounced anger that tends toward vindictiveness. Both of which are in the chain of the anger complex and end up in arguing and screaming.

The Greek in Ephesians 4:31 reveals to us the OSN progression of the anger complex. “*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*” It begins with **bitterness**, *πικρία* – *pikria*, which is the OSN reaction of the will to anything unwanted, or unpleasant. Then **wrath**, *θυμος* – *thumos*, which is an inner seething of hostility not yet expressed. Then **anger**, *οργη* – *orge*, anger now that is more pronounced and directed at those around the person, usually vindictive in nature. Followed by **clamour**, *κραυγη* – *krauge*, which is anger manifesting itself in speech by arguing with people, or disagreeable, bickering, quarreling, etc. **Evil speaking**, *βλασφημία* – *blasphemia*, angry, insulting speech that is now intensified manifesting itself in trying to hurt the other person with words; lots of yelling and screaming. And lastly **malice**, *κακία* – *kakia*, which now gets into the areas of physical violence.

Being around angry people is always damaging to the individual. If not always to one's body, or one's personal property, then always to one's **soul!** The NIV has put her as a nagging wife, which is probably true, but it is too restrictive and mild a definition of the word *ka'as*. *Ka'as* tells us that she is not only angry, and a nagger, but that she has a volatile temper and is quick to go off for no reason at all, which she will be quick to avoid the blame by saying it's other people who made her angry. “That makes me mad”, or, “You made me mad”. It's always something else, or someone else, that is the reason why she's mad. And by blaming it on others she is able to avoid the responsibility for her own anger and pride. Remember, **anger is the emotional reaction of the mental attitude of pride!**

It's bad enough living in the close proximity of someone who is angry, but intolerable to live with an angry person who is always directing their anger at you with words! Over a period of time the damage done to the soul becomes quite severe, even warping the personality. No one likes being yelled at and no one likes to be around someone, who is always wanting to argue some point. No one likes being around someone, who is always wanting more things and is never thankful for what they have. No one likes being around someone who is always blaming you for everything that goes wrong in life. And even if they're not railing at you with harsh angry words, then there is always that radiated energy of anger that one has to live around. All of those things add up to the doctrinal husband having difficulty to maintain his own spiritual life. So it's better to live out in the desert than around that.

Proverbs 15:17 - "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." - KJV "Better a small serving of **vegetables** with love than a fattened calf with hatred." NIV -

טוֹב אֲרֵחַת יֶרֶק, וְאֵהָבָה-שֶׁ-עַם-- מִשׁוֹר אָבוּס, וְשֵׂ נֶאֱהָב-בוֹ

The lives of most people on earth center around the kitchen and food. Not just to eat, but also to socialize with the people you love, or care about. But more often than not, the dinner table is a place of strife and contention and even more so around the holidays. And one of the things that men love the most at the dinner table is meat! Especially big slabs of juicy steaks. Even in our culture here in America the thing that men love the most is barbeques. It's what they work so hard for, so at the end of the day, or week, they take their hard-earned money to buy meat to cook. And the thought of having a veggie platter to most men is, well, distasteful. Somehow a cold beer and a stalk of celery doesn't appeal to us.

But what the Scriptures teach us is not **what** you eat, but **whom** you eat with! Or rather the **atmosphere** that exists around the one you are eating with. The word for **herbs** is *yaraq*, meaning green, and it refers to not just herbs, but to all vegetables. Which, for most people in those days, would be the most inexpensive food that one could put on the table seeing that they grew up so readily from the ground.

The word for *dinner* here is *aruchath* and it was the word used for not just a serving, which would certainly be the case, but for **an appointed portion, a ration of food**. It would denote the idea that one did not have a lot of money, certainly not enough money to buy steaks, but even beyond that the funds were so low that **they had to even apportion the amount of food that each person had to eat!** A concept that many doctrinal believers are well familiar with.

So Proverbs tells us that a small serving of vegetables is better than a big steak dinner! But how so? We need to remember what being better is all about. The Hebrew word for better is *tob*, which has a variety of meanings. It means that something is good in itself, that it has a quality of goodness about it, therefore it has the idea of something that is **good for you**, therefore it is not only **desirable**, but also **preferable!** It is better for one's piece of mind, sanity, and mental and physical health. When used in context with something else, then it has the idea of comparison telling us that it is **better!**

What it's simply saying that it is to the husband's, or wife's, advantage and benefit, it's better, preferable, for him/her, "*to have a small serving of vegetables with love than a fattened calf with hatred*". So how is it to the believer's advantage *to have vegetables with love, instead of steak with hatred*? For the doctrinal believer there are three main things that stand out. One, is to keep themselves from engaging in any OSN related activity; the yelling, screaming, bickering, arguing, and all the rest that goes with arguments. Two, so they can protect their own souls from the damage done to it by the constant anger and hatred. Three, so they can have peace and tranquility, by not being around hatred, for the purpose that they can live in their own spiritual life!

A **stalled ox**, refers to the practice of keeping the cow stalled so it became fat, so it refers to a fattened calf, which denoted the epitome of good food to eat, large and plentiful portions and a banquet for all. What made the difference is not what you eat, nor necessarily the people you ate with, but **what the mental attitude of the people were!** And it came down to love or hate. **Love** (RMA) was the Hebrew word *ahab*, and **hatred** was the word *sinah*. Now **hatred** is a concept that deserves a study of its own and its dynamics, but one of the concepts that go with this emotion is **coolness and emotional**

distance. What this means is that the couple, or whoever else is there at the dinner table, doesn't have to be angry and arguing, but that **there exists this coolness and emotional distance between the two!**

Proverbs 27:15 - “*A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.*” KJV
“*A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm;*” NIV

דָּלֶף טוֹרֵד, בַּיּוֹם סִגְרִיר; וְאֵשׁ תּוֹדוֹנִים (מְדַיְנִים), נִשְׂאֵת הַנָּה

Brawling **woman**, or quarrelsome woman, or a contentious woman here is *esheth midwaniym*. The word for woman, *ishah*, which is also used to denote a wife. *Midwanim* was the type of wife, or woman, who thinks she's right about everything and argues with her husband on just about everything in the home. Her personal issues deal with such things as having a strong mental attitude of pride, a will that won't bend, controlling personality, often a incorrect sense of moral superiority, thinking she's in the right all the time, (the thought she could be wrong doesn't enter into her mind), refusal to submit to authority, a rejection of doctrinal authority, lack of humility, anger, lack of true gentleness, polemic attitude, (wants to fight all the time). And if ever confronted with these issues, she'll argue that she doesn't! Trying to get her to see reason and stop, is like trying to restrain the wind.

Now here she's put as a leaky roof on a very rainy day. The first thing that come to mind is that she's **annoying!** This goes on all the time and doesn't stop. Another thing is that what she does destroys the reason why you have a home in the first place. Now the walls of the house are to keep predators and unwanted people out of the house, plus afford you privacy from the world at large. But the roof is something different. It exists to keep the weather out, especially the rain!

Now when it starts raining the one thing you want is to be able to be indoors where you can have a little fire going, so you can be warm and dry! Not to mention to protect your furniture and belongings inside. But if there are leaks in the roof and it's raining, especially if it's raining hard, then water is going to be coming in all over the place!

Instead of being warm, dry and comfortable in your little house, you now have to run around inside trying to do something about the water coming in. Your peace, quiet and comfort are all out the window now. Not to mention that you are going to have to face a big and expensive problem of fixing the roof after the storm passes.

Then there is that annoying matter, like the sound of dripping water, either from a faucet or the roof, of listening to her go on all the time about something. Constant complaining, constant nagging, constant anger. It wears the man down. Not that he is going to give in to her, perhaps as she hopes he might, but that all love and sweetness is gone.

And with a leaky roof, just about the time when you think the problem is gone, there it goes springing a leak in another place. And so it is with a contentious woman, who complains about something all the time. You may think she's through, but she's not. She'll start up again in another place over something else. The secret for the NT wives of God today to not be like this is to confess her sins to God, live in the filling of the Holy Spirit in the RMA of agape and start being thankful!

Instead of her building up her home into a relaxed, loving, tranquil setting for all who live there, she has turned it into a battleground. “*Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*” Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman, *chaqmah*, is the woman who learns and **applies**

Bible Doctrine in her home. While the foolish woman, *ivveleth*, is the woman who **doesn't!**