

LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS

- this principle is found twice in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament (Prov 10:12; 17:9; 1 Cor 13:7; 1 Peter 4:8)

PROVERBS 17:9

- covering sins preserves loving relationships

- a transgression (*peshah*) is a sin committed against you, others, or God

- to cover (*kasah*) is used of (1) a woman covering her face with a veil (Gen 38:14–15),

(2) people covering their bodies with clothing (Exod 28:42), (3) a cloud covering the sun (Ezek 32:7),

(4) a hunter covering an animal's blood with dirt (Lev 17:13), and (5) water covering the earth at creation (Psa 104:6)

- we cover things to hide them from sight—to keep people from seeing them

- to repeat (*shannah*) is to say or do something again—twice, a second time (Gen 41:32; Job 29:22; Prov 26:11)

- repeating a sin separates close friends: *parad* is used of a chariot and horses of fire separating Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:11)

and an *'alluph* may be a young bride's husband (Prov 2:17) or a very close friend (Psa 55:12–13)

- the tongue more than anything else separates friends (Prov 16:28; 18:8; James 3:8; solution, Prov 26:20)

- asymmetrical antithetical parallelism: all you have to do to cover a sin is refuse to repeat what you have seen or heard

PROVERBS 10:12

- love covers all sins: the Hebrew verb *kasah* 'cover' is a potential imperfect—translate 'love is able to cover all transgressions'

- you may discuss it only with those who heard or saw the sin committed

- love does not seek to embarrass, humiliate, discredit, or avenge (Prov 17:17a; Rom 13:10; cf. opposite in Dan 6:4–5)

- God hates people who stir up strife (Prov 6:16–19)

- if you repeat a sin, it will be difficult to win back a friendship (Prov 18:19)

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7

- to cover (*stego*) is often used of keeping secrets: (1) "he became intoxicated and unable to keep his secrets any longer to himself" (Josephus, *Life* 225), and (2) "Take no counsel with a fool, for he will not be able to keep your secret" (Sirach 8:17)

- 'covers all things' is an allusion to Proverbs 10:12—understand 'all sins' or 'all transgressions'

- covering sins is a part of loving one another (cf. John 15:12; Rom 13:8; 1 John 4:11)

- when someone wrongs you, don't tell everyone about it—a quick way to lose friends

1 PETER 4:8

- covering sins is necessary to maintain a continual love for one another in the local church:

'having a continual love for one another, in view of the fact that love covers a multitude of sins' (RCL)

- to cover (*kalupto*) is used of covering (1) bodies with hills (Luke 23:30), (2) a lamp with a jar (Luke 8:16), and

(3) a boat with waves (Matt 8:24)—to hide them from sight

- a 'multitude' is a 'large number' (*plethos*)—e.g., of so many fish the disciples could not haul the net into the boat (John 21:6)

- putting up with one another in love helps us to cover sins committed against us (Eph 4:1–3; Col 3:12–14):

anechomai is used of persecution (1 Cor 4:12) and awful smells—from worms infesting Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc 9:12)

SINS TO NOT COVER

- don't try to cover your own sins to hide them from God (Job 31:33; Psa 32:5; Prov 28:13)

- don't cover sins that are a temptation or danger to others—expose them (legalism, Matt 15:1–8; "the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy," Gal 2:13; continual public sin in the local church, 1 Tim 5:20)