



American Expression E2531 Marry in haste, repent at leisure

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The proverb “marry in haste, repent at leisure” serves as a cautionary reminder about the importance of careful decision-making, particularly in matters as significant as marriage. It warns that rushing into such a lifelong commitment without proper thought or preparation may lead to regret that lingers for years. The phrase emphasizes the contrast between the quickness of action and the slowness of living with the consequences, making it relevant not only to marriage but also to many other major life choices.

At its core, the saying suggests that marriage requires deep understanding, mutual respect, and shared values. When people marry impulsively, based on infatuation, external pressure, or fleeting circumstances, they may later discover incompatibilities that were overlooked. These can range from differences in lifestyle and goals to mismatched personalities or values. The proverb highlights that while love may spark quickly, building a strong foundation for marriage takes time and careful thought.

The phrase also reflects a broader principle of human behavior: important decisions made hastily often result in long-term consequences. Just as one might regret an impulsive purchase or career decision, marrying too quickly can lead to discontent, disappointment, or even separation. The “repent at leisure” part of the saying underscores how regret is often a slow, drawn-out process that cannot easily be undone, especially when the decision involves emotional, financial, and social ties.

Culturally, this proverb has resonated across centuries because marriage has always been one of life’s most profound commitments. In earlier societies where divorce was difficult or stigmatized, the warning carried even greater weight. Today, while separation is more socially acceptable, the emotional pain and practical difficulties of an ill-considered marriage remain significant. Thus, the wisdom of the saying still applies, encouraging people to approach such decisions with patience and foresight.

The proverb also speaks to the importance of discernment and maturity. Entering into marriage requires not just romantic feelings but also an understanding of responsibility, compromise, and long-term vision. Rushed marriages may overlook these factors, while thoughtful preparation helps couples navigate challenges with resilience. In this way, the saying is not simply a warning against marriage but an encouragement to prepare wisely for it.

In modern times, the phrase can be applied metaphorically to other areas of life. Whether it is entering into a business partnership, making a major investment, or committing to a new opportunity, decisions taken without due diligence may result in extended regret. The timelessness of the saying lies in its universal message: act with patience, for the weight of regret is heavier than the burden of waiting.

In conclusion, “marry in haste, repent at leisure” is a proverb that emphasizes the consequences of impulsive decisions, particularly in marriage but also in broader aspects of life. It reminds us that while hasty actions may feel exciting in the moment, the regrets that follow can last far longer than the initial thrill. By encouraging thoughtfulness, patience, and discernment, the phrase remains a valuable piece of wisdom. Ultimately, it calls us to take our time in making life’s most important choices, for the cost of rushing may be a lifetime of repentance.

#### Questions for Discussion

1. What does the proverb “marry in haste, repent at leisure” teach us about decision-making?
2. Can rushing into marriage ever lead to positive outcomes, or is regret almost inevitable?
3. How does this saying apply to modern relationships compared to traditional societies?
4. In what other areas of life besides marriage might this proverb be relevant?
5. How can patience and preparation help prevent long-term regret in major commitments?