

Ecclesiastes 7:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

Analysis

For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth (כִּי גַם־רַב־מַעַמִּים יָדַע לִבְךָ, ki gam-pe'amim rabbot yada libekha)—'for also many times your heart knows.' **That thou thyself likewise hast cursed others** (אֲשֶׁר גַּם־אַתָּה קָלַלְתָּ אֲחֵרִים, asher gam-attah killalta acherim)—that you also have reviled others. The verb qalal (to curse, belittle, treat with contempt) mirrors verse 21's mekalelekha.

The Preacher employs devastating self-awareness as antidote to hypersensitivity: your servant curses you? You've done the same to others countless times. This isn't justifying slander but recognizing universal human failure to control the tongue. James 3:2 states, 'If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man'—but none are perfect. The phrase 'thine own heart knoweth' appeals to conscience: you're aware of your own verbal sins, even if others aren't. Jesus's teaching about removing the log from your own eye before addressing your brother's speck (Matthew 7:3-5) applies perfectly. Humility about our own tongue sins creates appropriate tolerance for others' failings.

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures were hypersensitive to verbal affronts, often leading to feuds and violence. Qoheleth's counsel to acknowledge mutual guilt was countercultural wisdom promoting social peace.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does remembering your own history of speaking badly about others create appropriate humility when you're criticized?
2. In what ways might hypersensitivity to others' words reveal unacknowledged sin in your own speech patterns?
3. What would it look like to extend the same grace to critics that you hope others extend to you?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	גַם	פְּעָמִים	רַב זֹאת	יָדַע	לִבְךָ	אִשְׁרֵךְ	גַּם
H3588	H1571	For oftentimes	H7227	knoweth	also thine own heart	H834	H1571
		H6471		H3045	H3820		
אֵת		קָלָל לָךְ		אֲחֵרִים:			
H859		that thou thyself likewise hast cursed		others			
		H7043		H312			

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