

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 (ki gam-pe'amim rabbit yada libekha)—'for also many times your heart knows.' **That thou thyself likewise hast cursed others** (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

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|--------|--------|---|-------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|------|------|------|-------|
| גַּם | אֲשֶׁר | לְבָב | לְבָב | לְבָב | עַד | רְבָב | לְבָב | פָּעַם | וְתַ | וְתַ | וְתַ | גַּם |
| H3588 | H1571 | For oftentimes | H7227 | knoweth | H3045 | also thine own heart | H834 | | | | | H1571 |
| | | H6471 | | | | H3820 | | | | | | |
| אַתָּה | | לְבָב | לְבָב | | אֶחָרִים: | | | | | | | |
| H859 | | that thou thyself likewise hast cursed | H7043 | others | H312 | | | | | | | |

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