

Ecclesiastes 7:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Analysis

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry (אל-תְּבַהַל בָּרוּךְ לְגַעֲוָס) al-tevahal be'ruchakha likhos)—'Hasty' (tevahal) means to rush recklessly or act impulsively. The command warns against giving in to immediate emotional reactions. 'Spirit' (ruach) here is the seat of emotions and will, while 'anger' (ka'as) denotes vexation, frustration, or rage.

For anger resteth in the bosom of fools (כִּי כַּעַס בְּחִיקָה קְסִילִים יָנוּחַ) ki kha'as becheq kesilim yanuach)—The verb 'resteth' (yanuach) means 'settles down' or 'dwells permanently.' The 'bosom' (cheq) is the chest or heart, where one harbors emotions. 'Fools' (kesilim) are not merely ignorant but morally deficient—those who reject wisdom. While righteous indignation has its place (Ephesians 4:26), nursing anger reveals foolishness. James 1:19-20 echoes this: 'Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.'

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature across cultures valued emotional self-control as a mark of maturity. Proverbs repeatedly contrasts the quick-tempered fool with the wise person who restrains anger (Proverbs 14:17, 29; 15:18; 19:11). In Mediterranean honor-shame cultures, public displays of anger were common as means of asserting honor or responding to perceived slights. Yet biblical wisdom consistently elevates self-control above reactivity. The rabbis later developed

extensive teaching on controlling the yetzer hara (evil inclination), especially regarding anger. This verse anticipates Jesus's teaching that anger itself can be sinful (Matthew 5:22) and Paul's command to 'put off' anger (Colossians 3:8).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What situations or people trigger your immediate anger? How might you cultivate 'slowness to anger' in those contexts?
2. Is there anger you've allowed to 'rest in your bosom' rather than quickly resolving? What steps toward forgiveness and release do you need to take?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵד יְהֹוָה לֹא תִּתְּבַּהַת תְּבַהַת לְכָעָס כִּי בְּרוּךְ בְּרֹאֶת כְּעָס כְּעָס
H408 Be not hasty H926 in thy spirit H7307 to be angry H3707 for anger H3588 in the bosom H2436

בְּסִיל יְמִינָתְךָ: כְּסִיל יְמִינָתְךָ
of fools H3684 resteth H5117

Additional Cross-References

James 1:19 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Proverbs 14:17 (Parallel theme): He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

Proverbs 16:32 (Spirit): He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Mark 6:19 (Parallel theme): Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:

Jonah 4:9 (Parallel theme): And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

2 Samuel 13:22 (Parallel theme): And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

2 Samuel 19:43 (Parallel theme): And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

2 Samuel 13:28 (Parallel theme): Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

Mark 6:24 (Parallel theme): And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

Genesis 4:8 (Parallel theme): And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.