

Proverbs 14:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

Analysis

This proverb contrasts quick-tempered foolishness with calculated wickedness. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly" addresses reactive behavior. Qetsar-appayim ya'aseh ivvelet (קצר-אפים יעשה אולת, short of nostrils does foolishness). Qetsar appayim (literally "short of nose/nostrils") idiomatically means quick-tempered, hot-headed. Such people ya'aseh ivvelet (יעשה אולת, do foolishness)—act stupidly in anger.

"And a man of wicked devices is hated" warns against calculated evil. Ve'ish mezimmot yissane (וְאִישׁ מְזִמּוֹת יִשְׁנֶה, and a man of schemes is hated). Mezimmah (מְזִמָּה, scheme, plan, device) describes deliberate, thought-out wickedness. Such people incur hatred—from God and others.

The proverb addresses two types of wrongdoing: reactive foolishness and premeditated wickedness. Both are condemned, but differently. Quick anger produces impulsive stupidity—words and actions regretted later. James 1:19-20 warns: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Calculated evil is worse—deliberately planned wickedness. Proverbs 6:16-18 lists those who "devise wicked imaginations" among seven abominations. Jesus addressed anger's sinfulness (Matthew 5:22) and Satan's schemes (Ephesians 6:11). Christians must cultivate self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) and reject both reactive anger and premeditated evil.

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures valued controlled emotions. Quick-tempered people caused feuds, violence, and social disruption. Conversely, those who schemed wickedly undermined communities through conspiracies and plots. Leaders needed patience (Proverbs 16:32, 19:11). Joseph exemplified refusing to scheme vengeance despite provocation (Genesis 50:20). Jesus perfectly controlled anger, expressing righteous indignation appropriately (Mark 3:5, John 2:13-17) while never sinning.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. In what situations are you most prone to quick anger, and how can you cultivate patience and self-control?
2. How does the difference between reactive foolishness and calculated wickedness help you understand different types of sin?
3. What spiritual practices (prayer, Scripture meditation, accountability) help prevent both impulsive anger and premeditated evil?

Interlinear Text

קָצָר	אֶפְיִם	יַעֲשֶׂה	אָוִלָּת	וְאִישׁ	מִזֵּמֹת
He that is soon	angry	dealeth	foolishly	and a man	of wicked devices
H7116	H639	H6213	H200	H376	H4209
וְשָׂנְאָהּ:					
is hated					
H8130					

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 14:29 (Parallel theme): He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Proverbs 29:22 (Parallel theme): An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

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

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (Parallel theme): Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Proverbs 15:18 (Parallel theme): A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

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

Proverbs 22:24 (Parallel theme): Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

Isaiah 32:7 (Evil): The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

Proverbs 12:16 (Parallel theme): A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.

Proverbs 6:18 (Evil): An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,