

Proverbs 22:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

Analysis

This proverb warns against close association with angry people. 'Make no friendship' (אל־תִּתְּרֶה/al-titra'eh, do not associate/befriend) with 'an angry man' (בֶּאֱלֹאֵף/ba'al af, literally 'master/possessor of anger'). The parallel 'furious man' (אִישׁ חֵמֹת/ish chemot, man of wrath) intensifies the warning. This addresses habitual, uncontrolled anger—not occasional righteous indignation but a character marked by rage. The command uses the strongest relational term—'friendship'—indicating that even casual association proves dangerous. Anger is contagious. Proverbs 22:25 (next verse) explains why: 'Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' Anger learned becomes anger practiced. Paul commands: 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger... be put away from you' (Ephesians 4:31). James warns: 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God' (James 1:20). While righteous anger exists (Mark 3:5; John 2:13-17), most human anger flows from pride and selfishness.

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures often valued aggressive masculinity. Military prowess, quick vengeance, and fierce honor defense were culturally praised. Yet Proverbs consistently condemns uncontrolled anger: 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty' (Proverbs 16:32); 'A wrathful man stirreth up strife' (Proverbs 15:18). Israel's history records the devastation wrought by angry men: Cain killed Abel (Genesis 4:5-8); Simeon and Levi massacred Shechem (Genesis 34:25-31); Saul's rage drove David into exile (1 Samuel 18-31). Jesus reframed

anger as heart-murder: 'whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment' (Matthew 5:22). The early church emphasized transformed relationships—Christians were to be 'kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another' (Ephesians 4:32), contrasting sharply with the violent Greco-Roman culture.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Who in your life exhibits habitual anger, and how might their influence be affecting you negatively?
2. What is the difference between righteous anger at sin/injustice versus sinful anger rooted in pride?
3. How can you cultivate 'slow to anger' character (Proverbs 14:29) in a culture that valorizes outrage?

Interlinear Text

אֵל	תִּתְּבַע	אֶת	בְּעַל	אָף	אִישׁ	וְאֶת
H408	Make no friendship	H854	man	with an angry	H854	man
	H7462		H1167	H639		H376
וְעִם מוֹתָף	לֹא	תֵּבֹא:				
and with a furious	H3808	thou shalt not go				
H2534		H935				

Additional Cross-References

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

Proverbs 21:24 (Parallel theme): Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

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