

Proverbs 26:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

Analysis

One who passes by and meddles in another's quarrel is like grabbing a dog's ears. The Hebrew 'charah `al riyb' (meddling in strife) and 'machaziyq be'adeney keleb' (holding dog's ears) creates vivid warning. Grabbing dog's ears invites attack - dog will bite. Interfering in others' quarrels produces similar result - both parties turn on meddler. This wisdom warns: don't insert yourself into conflicts that don't concern you. Peacemaking is noble; meddling is foolish.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom recognized difference between helpful mediation and harmful meddling. Proverbs 20:3 teaches: 'It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.' Jesus commanded: 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone' (Matthew 18:15) - direct involvement when you're offended party, not interference in others' disputes. Romans 14:4 asks: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?'

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What conflicts are you meddling in that don't concern you?
2. How can you distinguish helpful peacemaking from harmful meddling?
3. What 'dog's ears' have you grabbed by interfering inappropriately, and what resulted?

Interlinear Text

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|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| מִמֶּנּוּ יִקַּח | בְּאָזְנֵי | כָּ לֵב | הַ תַּעֲבֹר |
| belonging not to him is like one that taketh | by the ears | a dog | He that passeth by |
| H2388 | H241 | H3611 | H5674 |
| הַ תַּעֲבֹר | עַל | רֵיב | לֹא |
| He that passeth by | H5921 | with strife | H3808 |
| H5674 | | H7379 | H0 |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 20:3 (Parallel theme): It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Luke 12:14 (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Proverbs 18:6 (Parallel theme): A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.