

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 'machaziyyq 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

מִנְזַיְתָּךְ	בְּאַזְנֵי	בְּלֹבֶבֶת	מִתְעַבֵּר
belonging not to him is like one that taketh	by the ears	a dog	He that passeth by
H2388	H241	H3611	H5674
רֵבֶבֶל	לֹא	לֹא	רֵבֶבֶל
He that passeth by	with strife	H0	H3808
H5674	H7379		

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.