

Proverbs 3:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

Analysis

Devising harm against trusting neighbors is wicked. The Hebrew 'charash' (devise/plot) indicates deliberate scheming, while 'betach' (dwells securely/trustingly) describes vulnerability. Betraying someone who trusts you multiplies wickedness - you exploit their vulnerability. This verse condemns predatory relationships where trust becomes weapon. God's people must be trustworthy, especially toward those who depend on us.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture depended on honor and trust for social cohesion. Betraying neighbors violated fundamental social contract and reflected Canaanite rather than Israelite ethics. The Ten Commandments' second table regulated neighbor relations, and prophets consistently condemned those who exploited trust for gain.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Have you ever exploited someone's trust in you, and what restitution might be needed?
2. How can you become more trustworthy in relationships where others depend on you?
3. What safeguards prevent us from rationalizing harm against those who trust us?

Interlinear Text

וְיֹשֵׁב בְּעַל מִתְּפָרֵשׂ אֶל
H408 not evil H5921 against thy neighbour H7453 Devise H1931 seeing he dwelleth H3427

אַתָּה לֹכֶד טָה
securely H854 H983

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 6:14 (Parallel theme): Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

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