

Psalms 37:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

Analysis

The progression—'cease from anger, forsake wrath, fret not'—addresses emotional responses to injustice. Each verb intensifies: cease (Hebrew 'raphah,' let go, release), forsake (Hebrew 'azab,' abandon, leave behind). The warning that fretting leads 'to do evil' reveals anger's dangerous trajectory—righteous indignation can morph into sinful action, making us like those we oppose. James 1:20 confirms: 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' Self-controlled response to injustice testifies to God's sovereignty.

Historical Context

Honor-shame culture made retaliation expected and even required. David's counsel to release anger rather than avenge wrong challenged cultural norms, pointing toward Christ's teaching on enemy love.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does your anger over injustice risk leading you into sin?

2. What practices help you process righteous anger without sinful expression?

Interlinear Text

כִּי יִרָף	מִן אַף	וַעֲזֹב	חֵמָה	אֵל	תִּתְחַרֵּר
Cease	from anger	and forsake	wrath	H408	fret
H7503	H639	H5800	H2534		H2734
<hr/>					
אֵל	לִהְרֹעַ:				
not thyself in any wise	to do evil				
H389	H7489				

Additional Cross-References

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

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.

Ephesians 4:31 (Judgment): Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

Ephesians 4:26 (Judgment): Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Colossians 3:8 (Judgment): But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Job 5:2 (Judgment): For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

Jonah 4:1 (Parallel theme): But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

Job 18:4 (Parallel theme): He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

Jonah 4:9 (Parallel theme): And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.

