



[Ecclesiastes 7:21-22](#)

(21) Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: (22) For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

King James Version

Solomon deals with what might be a lingering effect of the paradoxical trial found in verse 15. While the individual endures what transpires, it attracts the attention of others, usually close friends and family members—and they talk. This kind of talk has a tendency to intensify the trial's discomfort.

The talking might be better called “gossip,” but that is not an absolute because it may be sincere, well-intentioned conversation. Even if it is sincere, well-intended, and in no way malicious, the one experiencing the paradox may take it very hard, making overcoming more difficult.

Human nature is prone to take advantage of another's hard times, pointing out and passing on what it thinks are his or her mistakes or outright character weaknesses. But for that other person, it is like taking a punch to the gut. Every one of us will be on the receiving end of [gossip](#), maybe even frequently.

Why is it so difficult to deal with? It damages our pride, our opinion of ourselves. The best defense against it is a clear conscience, that is, to be innocent of what the gossiper supposes of us and to be consistent in [goodness](#), a fruit of God's Spirit. Such a person can patiently weather the passing of the gossip storm clouds.

Though He was perfectly innocent, [Jesus](#) had to endure the taunts of others. Should we expect to escape the same? Thus, verse 22 follows with the reminder that we are in all likelihood guilty of practicing the same against

others. What goes around comes around. What one sows, one also reaps ([Galatians 6:7](#)). It is a character weakness to give in to the hurt feelings, forgetting that none of us is infallible, and we might have given cause for the grief now coming back on us.

Can we remember the times we lost our tempers and called somebody a “stupid idiot”? Can we remember when we cut somebody off on the highway and given others grief? How many times have we forgotten, been late, or been outright careless in our self-centeredness? Since we have not been absolutely pure in character ourselves, we cannot claim the high ground above others, maintaining we do not deserve the gossip.

God's counsel through Solomon is that it is best just to take our licks, [repent](#), and do better in the future without feeling we have the right to complain.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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