

## Forgiveness Is a Virtue, Eph 4:32; the Anger Complex: Impulsive, Smoldering, & Explosive, v. 26; Reactor Factors: Aggressive & Passive-Aggressive Behavior; Creation of Discord, v. 27

14. Forgiveness is a Christian virtue but is obviously preceded by an act that requires it. Thus forgiveness is the victim's response to the hurtful or damaging statements or actions of others.
15. What precedes forgiveness is wrongdoing by a perpetrator. To forgive the actions of others in effect defers the case to the Supreme Court of Heaven while remaining filled with the Holy Spirit.
16. Forgiveness is God's system of getting the victim out of His way. It allows the victim to maintain spirituality so God can execute justice.
17. On the other side of the coin, what is the responsibility of the perpetrator? The answer is given earlier in the Ephesians 4 passage:

**Ephesians 4:26** - Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. (NASB)

18. The word "angry" is the present middle imperative of the verb **ὀργίζω, orgizō**: "to be angry." This is the recipient of hostility or the victim of wrongdoing.
19. The present tense is auristic; it presents the action as taking place in present time. The middle voice is permissive which means the subject causes the action of the verb to be produced upon himself. The imperative mood is of concession. It does not take on the usual force of a mandate but makes a concession to what is obvious and currently going on.
20. The best English translation is, "Although you may have become angry." This is followed by the conjunction **καί, kai**: "in spite of that fact."
21. Then comes a straightforward imperative of prohibition from the present active imperative of the verb **ἁμαρτάνω, hamartanō**, plus the negative particle **μή, mē**: "stop sinning!"
22. The present tense is descriptive indicating what is actually taking place: the impulsive sin of anger is occurring. The active voice indicates that the impulsive sin of anger if continued would function as the trigger mechanism of chronic sins. The imperative mood is a negative of prohibition to stop this.

**Ephesians 4:26** - [CTL] Although you may have become angry [ **ὀργίζω, orgizō**: **impulsive sin** ], in spite of that fact, stop sinning [ **this impulsive sin before it leads to chronic sins** ].

23. Impulsive sins not dealt with through rebound and biblical problem-solving devices will motivate chronic sins.

24. Anger plus bitterness work much like a fire—anger being the flames, bitterness the quiet smoldering embers hidden behind a thin ashen façade.
25. The fuel for the initial impulsive fire of anger is the alleged unfair circumstance to which a person reacts.
26. This sudden burst of flame can be quickly quenched if the healing water of the Word is administered to the situation.
27. If not, then anger begins to smolder in the soul creating a bed of embers which illustrate the sin of bitterness.
28. We picture impulsive anger as an overt burst of fire, a violent billowing flame that is very heated but generally short-lived.
29. But when impulsive sins are not volitionally doused they smolder as chronic sin. The definition of “smolder” is important to our illustration:

**Smolder: to exist or continue in a suppressed state.<sup>1</sup>**

**Smolder: to burn sluggishly, without flame, and often with much smoke; to show suppressed anger, hate, or jealousy.<sup>2</sup>**

30. Note that in a suppressed state the chronic sin is not a raging fire but a suppressed flame, often with much smoke.
31. Where there is smoke there is fire, and the smoke is the façade of gossip and maligning that goes on in order to justify one’s contention of having been wronged.
32. Paul wants them to douse the flames with rebound. But if they do not quit reacting in anger they will develop the chronic sin of bitterness which will smolder in their souls as suppressed anger, hatred, and jealousy.
33. A fire’s embers are thinly veiled by a coating of ash but just underneath are simmering red-hot coals.
34. Such is bitterness. It, like the embers, can be suppressed and hidden but it can very easily burst into billowing flames with the slightest infusion of fuel.
35. Providing the fuel is the unresolved situation between the reversionist and the person formally revered and beloved.
36. Anything associated with the ongoing feud serves as the source of fuel and anger reveals itself as a volatile, billowing outburst ignited from the hidden embers of smoldering bitterness.
37. Anger plus bitterness thus creates a major character flaw in the soul of the believer which constantly looks for fresh fuel to keep the fire going.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v.: “smolder.”

<sup>2</sup> *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v.: “smolder.”

38. Unresolved anger left to smolder into bitterness begins to accumulate several overt manifestations of what is otherwise hidden behind the façade.

**Ephesians 4:31** - Let all bitterness, wrath, and anger [ these are mentioned in reverse order: the chronic sin of bitterness is made manifest by explosive anger both of which are caused by mental attitude anger ] along with clamor and slander be put away from you, along with malice.

39. What process and procedure is the believer to use in order to douse the flames of impulsive emotional sins such as anger before they begin to smolder into chronic sins of bitterness, clamor, and slander?
40. The problem-solving devices are expressed in the second sentence of verse 26 which reads in the NASB, "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." The sentence begins with the nominative singular subject made up of two words, first the definite article **ὁ, ho** plus the noun **ἥλιος, hēlios**: "the sun."
41. This is followed by the negative particle **μή, mē** plus the present active imperative of the verb **ἐπιδύω, epiduō**: "to go down," thus translated: "do not let the sun set."
42. The present tense is pictorial which conveys to the mind a sunset in the process of taking place.
43. The thought is concluded with the prepositional phrase **ἐπί, epi** plus the dative of disadvantage from the noun **παροργισμός, parorgismos**: "on your angry mood."
44. This context uses three words for anger: (1) **ὀργίζω, orgizō**: the impulsive emotional sin of anger, (2) **παροργισμός, parorgismos**: if the *orgizō* is not dealt with then it begins to smolder as an angry mood: seething anger, the thinly camouflaged embers that simmer into the chronic sin of bitterness (**πικρία, pikria**), and (3) **θυμός, thumos**: the overt sin of explosive anger that billows from bitterness at the slightest provocation.
45. The anger of *orgizō* is impulsive and is the reaction to something real, imagined, or contrived. If not dealt with through rebound then justification for prolonging anger must be devised. This leads to gossip and maligning.
46. The bitterness of *parorgismos* increases in direct proportion to the length of time that suppressed anger is allowed to continue resulting in the chronic bitterness of *pikria*.

47. *Thumos* anger is the explosion of suppressed bitterness that is expressed in various ways; here are two: (1) aggressive behavior that includes verbal assaults such as slander, vituperations, abusive speech, maligning, and judging, or overt assaults such as revenge tactics, violence, rage, and murder; (2) passive-aggressive behavior that includes intentional avoidance of responsibility, procrastination, deliberate inefficiency, forgetfulness, feelings of resentment toward others, stubbornness, argumentativeness, sulking, moodiness, hostility toward authority figures, being easily offended, resentment of useful suggestions from others, projection, chronic impatience, and unexpressed anger or hostility.

**Ephesians 4:26** - Although you may have become angry [ ὀργίζω, *orgizō*: **impulsive sin** ] in spite of that stop sinning impulsively before it leads to chronic sinning. The sun must not set on your angry mood [ παροργισμός, *parorgismos*: **seething anger that leads to chronic bitterness** ],

48. Left unresolved and thus allowed to gain momentum as facilitated wheel-tracks of wickedness, this trifecta of anger will lead the believer into either moral or immoral degeneracy.
49. Which way it goes has to do with the trends of the individual's sinful nature. Either way the believer has made himself vulnerable to the influences of Satan himself, which is the warning contained in the next verse.

**Ephesians 4:27** - and do not give the devil an opportunity. (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the negative disjunctive particle **μηδέ, mēde** translated "stop." It continues the negative mandate begun in verse 26 which commands us not to let the sun set on our angry mood. This second imperative of prohibition commands the believer to stop giving the devil an opportunity. Failure to do the former contributes to failing the latter.
2. If you stop your impulsive sinning then you will prevent chronic sinning provided you do it before you go to bed. The passive-aggressive personality puts off dealing with the source of anger by denial of responsibility or projection of blame on others.
3. In a church this leads to discord among the members of the congregation as cliques, factions, and schisms develop, coagulate, and solidify. This eventually leads to a critical point where the church is divided leading to its destruction or having the disenchanteds withdraw from fellowship.
4. This explains why anger, bitterness, and their overt manifestations must be addressed by the pastor. It's either reconciliation among the personalities involved or continued disruption of the harmony that is required among those assembled.
5. No one wins in such a scenario. Sides are taken and truth is lost in a whirlwind of gossip, maligning, judging, and hearsay. It devolves into a Mexican Standoff where bitterness forbids any spiritual resolution of the issue.

6. Were the disagreement to arise outside the local church then its impact would have no detrimental effect on the congregation. But when those in the church are made party to the contretemps it gives the devil an opportunity.