

Venom: Emotion: The Orgizo-Parorgismos-Thumos Cycle on Interstate 64, Ephesians 4:26b

The sentence begins with the nominative singular subject made up of two words: first the definite article *ho* + the noun *helios* - “The sun.”

This is followed by the negative *me* plus the present active imperative of the verb: *epiduo* - “to go down”; “to set.”

present: Pictorial: conveys to the mind a sunset in the process of taking place.

active: The sun produces the action by being removed from our view by continuing its progress out of our sight.

imperative: Prohibition; with the negative *me* it expresses a negative mandate.

TXL: “The sun must not set ...”

The thought is concluded with the prepositional phrase: *epi* + the dative of disadvantage from the noun *parorgismos* – KJV “wrath”; NIV & NAS: “anger.” “... on your angry mood.”

This context uses three words for “anger”:

The first is found in the concessive imperative which opens:

Ephesians 4:26 - Although you may have become angry.

The word is *orgizo* and refers to the impulsively emotional sin of anger.

The second is found here, the noun *parorgismos*. If the emotional sin of anger is not dealt with by means of rebound then it begins to smolder as an angry mood in the mental attitude. Don’t let the sun set on it.

Unresolved *orgizo* results in the smoldering mental mood of *parorgismos* which refers to the thinly camouflaged emotional embers of easily exasperated and irritated chronic sins such as bitterness. The smoldering embers of chronic sins can be caused to billow into a rage of overt manifestations of anger by the introduction of the slightest outside adversity.

This brings us to the third word found in Ephesians 4:31, the noun *thumos*. This is the explosion of billowing flames fueled by the trigger of outside adversity. We could define this as suppressed turbulence in the soul manifest through overt expressions such as revenge motivation, slander, vituperations, abusive speech, expressions of resentment, revenge tactics, violence, rage, and murder.

Last Monday in Chesterfield there was an unfortunate illustration of this entire process. I want to give you the details of an accident that Jo Henra and I encountered on leaving for Alabama. We found ourselves in the midst of a major traffic jam on I-64 caused by a three-car accident which was precipitated by the sequence of events we have just outlined under the three words for “anger.” Here are the reports from several editions of last week’s St. Louis Post-Dispatch on a form of *thumos* called “road rage.”

Bryan, Bill and Norm Parish. “‘Road Rage’ Led To Fatal Accident, Police Speculate.” St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 12 Aug. 1997, p. 1A:

Chesterfield police say that “road rage” may have led to an accident Monday morning that killed a Florissant woman on Interstate 64.

Jennifer L. Hywari was driving to work, heading west on I-64, about 7:30 a.m. when a man in a red Toyota pickup pulled in front of her gray Ford Tempo and suddenly braked hard, police said.

Hywari tried to avoid the truck and veered across the median.

Her car was struck by an east-bound vehicle and flipped over; she was thrown out and was hit by oncoming traffic.

The Accident happened in the Gumbo area, about a half-mile east of the Daniel Boone Bridge.

Later police arrested a man from St. Louis, after he returned to the accident scene claiming to be a witness. But he was identified by other witnesses as having caused the accident.

“It appears to be a case of road rage,” said Chesterfield Sgt. Chris Connelly.

The suspect apparently became angry over something in traffic and pulled in front of the victim’s car and braked, Connelly said.

He did not know what had prompted the suspect’s apparent anger.

Glazer, Sarah. “‘Road Rage’ Steers Many Drivers, Experts Say.” St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 12 Aug. 1997, p. 3A:

WASHINGTON — It’s rush hour in rural Brewster, N.Y., and Mahattan-bound commuters are backed up for three miles on the two-lane road out of town. State Trooper Alan S. Kurlander sees so much aggressive driving as he cruises the scene that he could write tickets all morning.

Typical excuses for irresponsible driving—“Another guy cut me off,” “I’m late for work”—and a sense of self-righteous entitlement have grown too, troopers say. “Nobody wants to be responsible for their actions,” says Sgt. Michael Gadomski. “Civility is going down the tubes.”

The stories are almost comical, but the consequences are not. In local incidents reminiscent of nationally publicized “road rage” explosions, two women staged a high-speed passing duel, then stopped to continue the fight, one wielding a baseball bat; another angry motorist who pulled over was slashed with a knife.

Kelly, Robert and William C. Lhotka. “Driver Tells How Road Rage Caused Crash.” St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 15 Aug. 1997, p. 1A:

John W. Devanny became enraged when the driver in front of him forced him to brake suddenly and spill hot coffee on himself.

So he pulled alongside the car, driven by Jennifer Hywari, and made an obscene gesture. He yelled at her and threw the rest of his coffee at her. Then he quickly pulled in front of her and braked hard.

Hawari swerved to avoid him, lost control and ran into the median toward oncoming traffic headed eastbound on Interstate 64. Her car was broadsided and rolled over, throwing her into the path of another car. She was hit and killed.

Devanny was charged with involuntary manslaughter and leaving the scene of an accident. The incident is one of the most blatant cases of road rage officials have encountered, said St. Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch.

Devanny “apparently took offense at her being on his side of the highway,” McCulloch said.

“I think there is sufficient evidence to show that he caused her death. You’ve got to understand that when you engage in conduct like this there are some incredibly serious consequences.”

Devanny has a history of other speeding tickets and moving violations, including at least two cases when his drivers license was revoked or suspended.

Sgt. Chris Connelly of Chesterfield police, said Devanny gave police a statement admitting that he was angry at Hywari for pulling in front of him in the passing lane and then applying her brakes for an unknown reason.

“He said he didn’t intend for the death to happen, but that he just became enraged” after spilling the coffee, Connelly said.

Gray, Dave. “A Highway Encounter Turns Deadly.” St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 15 Aug. 1997, p. 8A:

1. John W. Devanny, driving a red Toyota pickup, has to break sharply when Jennifer Hywari, driving a gray Ford sedan, taps her brakes for an unknown reason. Devanny later says this caused him to spill a cup of hot coffee.
2. Angered, Devanny pulls alongside Hywari, shouting and making obscene gestures. He then throws a coffee cup and what remains of his coffee at Hywari’s car. Witnesses are unsure if Hywari was aware of Devanny’s rage.
3. Devanny then pulls in front of Hywari and brakes sharply, leaving her no room to stop.
4. This maneuver causes Hywari to lose control and swerve across the grassy median into oncoming traffic, where she is hit broadside by an oncoming car. As her car flips over, she is thrown out and hit by another car.

Tipton, Virgil. “I’ve Seen the Beast’s Glare.” St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 16 Aug. 1997, p. 14:

I know the monster called road rage. I’ve seen the Beast’s glare in other people’s eyes. I’ve surrendered gleefully to the Beast in me. And I’ve provoked it intentionally in others.

And maybe that’s why I am so saddened and so terrified by the death of Jennifer Hywari on Monday.

I’m saddened and terrified because I can see myself as Hywari. And I can see myself as Devanny. And I’ll bet that if you are honest with yourself, you can see yourself in both people, too.

Six years ago, when I was covering commuting for the Post-Dispatch, I intentionally took a slow drive in the fast land on Interstate 170 during evening rush hour. My idea then was to try to understand why some people drive slow in the fast land and to understand how people react to that.

Thinking of that experiment how makes my stomach roil. I annoyed dozens of people.

A colleague in my car counted 54 nasty looks, five headlight flashes, at least one honk, three shouts, one head shaken in disbelief and one driver passing on the shoulder.

That last incident ended the experiment.

What I did was legal and it was certainly enlightening, but it was no smart.

What we see here is the presence of unresolved *orgizo* which was left smoldering as bitterness or *parorgismos*. The very insignificant outside adversity of a woman tapping her brakes caused the embers to billow into a full-blown eruption of *thumos* resulting in:

- Revenge motivation: “*I will get her.*”
- Slander, vituperations, abusive speech: “*I yelled at her.*”
- Expressions of resentment: “*I flipped her off.*”
- Revenge tactics: “*I threw my coffee at her.*”
- Violence and rage: “*I pulled in front of her and jammed on brakes.*”
- Murder: The woman swerved into oncoming traffic and was killed.

Devanny has been charged with “*involuntary manslaughter*” which could result in seven years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

What went on here?

Ephesians 4:26a - Although you may have become angry [*orgizo*].

Devanny has been carrying around a lot of anger for years and its expressions have been documented.

Ephesians 4:26b - In spite of that fact, stop sinning.

Devanny never doused the emotional sin of anger and as a result it created a smoldering chronic sin of bitterness in his soul which only needed a small bit of fuel to cause its flames to billow. Why? Because:

Ephesians 4:26c - The sun must not set on your angry mood [*parorgismos*].

Because Devanny did not quench his emotionally impulsive sin of anger, it remained to smolder as an angry mood of bitterness. It expressed itself in a violent explosion of *thumos* called “*road rage*” last Monday morning. A woman’s life was lost while his life has been changed forever as we benefit from an excellent although unfortunate illustration of Ephesians 4:26.

Anger is an emotional sin. Emotion has no thought and is totally irrational in its function which can include everything from slander to murder.

PRINCIPLES

According to Psalm 4:4 it is possible to react to unfairness apart from sin. The problem-solving device has to do with grace orientation to life and doctrinal orientation to reality. Its execution requires us to defer the case to the Supreme Court of Heaven for prosecution.

If during the period of one’s righteous indignation the believer reacts to the circumstances and begins to plot retaliation or to seek revenge then chronic sins have begun to develop. The motivational sin for this process is usually anger.

The Royal Family Honor Code prevents the believer from seeking vengeance, maligning and judging others, and paying back evil for evil. Such *modus operandi* lowers the believer down to the level of his antagonist. Under grace orientation retaliation and vengeance is replaced by casting your cares on Him for he cares for you.

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

What Paul is emphasizing is that if the impulsive sin of anger is not handled immediately through rebound then it will function as a trigger mechanism for chronic sins. One of the major chronic sins that comes from unresolved anger is bitterness which expresses itself through retaliation, vindictiveness, implacability, revenge.

Impulsive anger, identified in our passage by the Greek word *orgizo* turns to bitterness if not managed by rebound. Unresolved anger remains in the soul as smoldering embers of bitterness, expressed in context by the Greek word *parorgismos*. We might call this Operation Smolder. Eventually this combination will make itself known through verbal castigations overt actions, or both. This is third word for anger in our passage, the noun *thumos* in verse Ephesians 4:31.