

Venom: Manifestations of Bitterness, Mandate for Removal, Ephesians 4:31

How this bitterness of soul is expressed is mentioned next in the form of two sins which are now very familiar to us:

thumos - This is the turbulent, irrational, and emotional outburst of anger which billows from the bed of smoldering ashes of bitterness. This explosion occurs whenever any circumstance provides it the fuel of opportunity. This is operational anger. It is accompanied by the noun: *orge* - This is the mental attitude sin of anger and may also be referred to as motivational anger. It promotes cruelty and revenge and thus threatens to become entrenched as the chronic sin of bitterness.

The conjunction *kai* occurs several times in this verse. It is often translated “*and*.” But here they are adjunctive conjunctions which join nouns and are best translated “*both ... and*.” Therefore, we have the translation: “*All bitterness, both operational anger and motivational anger ...*”

Notice that Paul associates bitterness with both words for “*anger*.” He goes in the reverse order so as to demonstrate original cause.

When a circumstance occurs that produces the emotional sin of anger—ὀργιζω—and it is not confessed before day’s end, then it begins to smolder in the soul as bitterness.

As unresolved anger feeds the smoldering embers of bitterness, other chronic sins join in: vindictiveness plots revenge but it does so behind a thin facade of ashes called self-righteous arrogance.

The adversary goes under the surveillance of self-righteous malice, a deep-seated desire to see him suffer. In order to justify an assault, fuel is needed in order to provide the necessary justification.

Something is said, done, or mishandled; a mistake is made, some display of imperfection or weakness occurs.

This perceived failure provides the fuel to ignite the smoldering embers of bitterness and the flames of operational anger billow forth and engulf the adversary in verbal and physical assaults which go the gamut from slander to murder.

Two specific expressions of bitterness are stated next beginning with the noun:

krauge - This is translated in the KJV and NAS with the word “*clamor*,” while the NIV uses “*brawling*.” The Greek word refers to a loud, unruly mob of people shouting invectives, quarreling, and fighting. In other words, a family reunion. In baseball it’s called a donnybrook. This is the end result of crusader arrogance. The second noun in this set is: *blasphemia* - This means slanderous vituperations which defame and demean one’s character, honor, or family lineage.

Ephesians 4:31 CTL - All bitterness, both operational anger and motivational anger, both brawling and slander ...

Paul again shows cause and effect by mentioning the donnybrook first which is caused by the hurling of verbal insults.

The triumvirate of anger has now run its course. Before somebody gets killed, we now have the mandate for recovery. It is presented by the aorist passive imperative of the verb: *airo* - to lift up; to take away; to remove; to put away from oneself. “*must be removed*.”

aorist: Culminative; views the process of removal in its entirety but regards it from the viewpoint of existing results.

This refers to the nine-step program for reversion recovery.

It emphasizes the initial phase which begins with personal realization of error—*metanoeo*, to admit wrongdoing to oneself.

This followed by the process and procedure of taking one's guilt to the throne of grace for adjudication—*homologeo*, confession alone to God alone.

This results in the filling of the Holy Spirit which makes available the divine operating assets related to spiritual growth, problem-solving from the biblical perspective, and decision making from this position of strength.

This is the process in its entirety but the emphasis is on the existing results—reversion recovery.

passive: The subject is acted upon by the nine-step program for reversion recovery. It is God's grace that produces the recovery beginning with rebound. The believer does not produce the action of recovery but receives it. This is why the passive voice is often referred to as the voice of grace.

imperative: The imperative mood expresses an action which may occur as the result of the subject's positive response to its request. This imperative makes a positive appeal to the volition of the fragmented believer imploring him to recover from involvement in cosmic living.

What follows next is a prepositional phrase *apo* plus the ablative of separation from the pronoun *su*: "*from all of you.*" Thus, our corrected translation now reads:

Ephesians 4:31 CTL - All bitterness, both operational anger and motivational anger, both brawling and slander, must be removed from all of you ...

Then comes a final prepositional phrase made up of the preposition *sun* plus the instrumental of association from two words: *pas kakia* - "*along with all evil.*"

All the major English translations give us the word "*malice*" here but we are going with "*evil.*" Here's why: The **Greek-English Lexicon**, edited by **Arndt and Gingrich**, gives us the following analysis for the noun *kakia*:

In the moral sense: depravity, wickedness, vice. A special kind of moral inferiority—malice, ill-will, malignity. For the adjective kakos:

In the moral sense—bad, evil. Of the characteristics, actions, emotions of men, therefore, evil, injurious, dangerous, pernicious.

W. E. Vine states that it is "whatever is evil in character."

The word "blasphemy" involves more than one's rejection of God or the making of some sacrilegious statement. It also refers to slander, defamation, and abusive speech directed towards others. This is how it is used in this context. The word is actually translated into the King James Version with the phrase "evil speaking."

Also in context is a warning against falling under the influence of the devil whose plan is evil.

In addition, the adjective *kakos* means evil in a general sense and is also classified as an injurious and pernicious emotion. This coincides with the brawling and the blasphemy as well and the emotional explosions of *thumos* which can be both dangerous and deadly.

Broadly what is morally or ethically evil is reflected in one's qualities, emotions, passions, and deeds. It involves that which is injurious, destructive, and deadly and is thus evil in both influence and effect.

Here the expression of evil is the sin of malice. Malice involves the desire and the motivation to inflict misery, suffering, pain, and injury on someone as a means of retribution.

But in addition to this there lurks underneath a large inventory of chronic sins of which malice is only one. Therefore, we translate *pas kakia*: “*along with all evil.*”

Ephesians 4:31 - All bitterness, both operational anger and motivational anger, both brawling and slander, must be removed from all of you along with all evil.