

## The Anger Complex: Impulsive, Seething, (Sunset Rebound), Chronic Bitterness, & Explosive; Party A Must Be Righteously Indignant; Party B Must Douse Seething Anger, Eph 4:26

36. The key to this passage is found in Ephesians 4:26. Theological debate has wrestled over the correct interpretation of this verse. A simple reading of the text in English appears to mandate the believer to be angry but to do so without sinning.
37. This appears nonsensical since anger is a sin. As we have noted, many theologians interpret the verb *orgizō* to mean “righteous indignation.” When Party A is the victim of Party B’s wrongdoing, righteous indignation about dispositions, comments, or actions that violate established standards of behavior is a possible result which could include the mental attitude sin of anger.
38. However, one may express righteous indignation and not sin. We have covered this concept recently in our examination of discernment compared with intolerance and judging. Here are a few principles pertinent to our current subject paraphrased from these lessons:
  - 1) Through discernment, leadership authority is able to recognize behaviors that are desirable or undesirable—the former are acceptable while the latter are not. This is not intolerance but wisdom.
  - 2) It is important for a leadership authority to discern the motives, intentions, and objectives of employees. Evaluation of individuals by the divine measure of Bible doctrine enables the boss to discern the character of Party-B employees.
  - 3) Wisdom allows the leader to evaluate employees for the purpose of praise, encouragement, and motivation on the one hand and constructive criticism, correction, and discipline on the other.
  - 4) Leadership authority is able to use wisdom to discern motives, intentions, and objectives that either complement or run counter to the standards of the organization and to make decisions accordingly.
  - 5) Scripture clearly states the obligations of both the employer and the employee in:

**Colossians 4:1** - Employers, treat your employees with justice and fairness, because you know that you also have a master in heaven. (NET)

**Colossians 3:22** - Employees, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching—like those who are strictly people-pleasers—but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord. (NET)

39. In Ephesians 4:26, the word anger (*orgizō*) can be righteous indignation on the part of Party A and is a commandment. Employers are to call employees on issues that concern their disposition, work ethic, and general behavior in an effort to develop the person into a professional.
40. There is yet another way to look at this verse and it looks at verse 26 from the standpoint of Party B. Before we proceed some technical details are necessary from Daniel B. Wallace:

**A Debatable and Exegetically Significant Test: Ephesians 4:26, “Be angry and do not sin.”**

Some grammarians think that a conditional imperative is assumed for the very passage that is highly debatable, Ephesians 4:26. Grammatically, there are three fundamental problems with taking ὀργίζω [*orgizō*] as a conditional imperative.

If ὀργίζω [*orgizō*] is not conditional, then what is the meaning of Eph. 4:26? Both imperatives should be taken at face value (command and prohibition, respectively): “Be angry and do not sin.” What supports this interpretation, among other things, is the rest of the verse: “Do not let the sun go down on the cause of your anger (παροργισμός [*parorgismos*]).” Verse 27, in this reconstruction, would thus mean that one should not give a place to the devil *by doing nothing about the sin in the midst of the believing community*. Entirely opposite of the “introspective conscience” view, this text seems to be a shorthand expression for church discipline, suggesting that there is biblical warrant for δικαία ὀργή [*dikaia orgē*] (as the Greeks put it)—righteous indignation.<sup>1</sup>

41. When Party B assumes righteous indignation in response to the legitimate righteous indignation of Party A, then Party B is guilty of deception. Those who place themselves on pedestals make of themselves an idol which is narcissistic.
42. In order for the delusion of perfection to be maintained then Party B must project blame on Party A. To confirm the illusion that guilt resides with Party A, others must be informed of the alleged unjust and unfair treatment.
43. When this occurs in the workplace and fellow workers accept the accusations as true, then there is dissension among the employees and the objectives of the organization suffer accordingly.
44. When this occurs in a local church and fellow believers accept the accusations as true, then there is discord within the congregation and the harmony required for an atmosphere of learning suffers accordingly.
45. Therefore, we arrive at the translation we noted earlier where Party B is the object of the imperative moods:

**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*: **bitterness** ],**

<sup>1</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 491-92.

46. The imperative mood of *orgizō* commands Party A to have δικαία ὀργή, *dikaia orgē*: “righteous indignation” when confronted with attitudes or behaviors that are unprofessional, whereas Party B, who harbors the sin of anger, is to confess that sin by sundown lest it result in bitterness and later emerge as explosive anger.
47. The solution for both is found in the final verse of the passage:  
**Ephesians 4:32** - But become kind, performing gracious acts toward each other, and compassionate, and keep on forgiving each other, just as God also by means of Christ has forgiven you.
48. This is an expression of the royal law but, as is evident, it is much more sophisticated in the New Testament than that practiced in the Old.
49. Old Testament saints could take the concept only so far as their spiritual life would allow. Their solution to exigencies was simply to put the matter before the Supreme Court of Heaven and leave the outcome to the justice of God.
50. Jewish believers did not have the filling of the Holy Spirit or the doctrines that we enjoy as under the prototype plan of God and the sophisticated spiritual life.