

# Ephesians 4:31 Commentary

PREVIOUS

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EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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Ephesians 4:31 Let **all bitterness** and **wrath** and **anger** and **clamor** and **slander** be put away from you, **along** with **all malice**.  
([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [pasa pikria kai thumos kai orge kai krauge kai blasphemia artheto \(3SAPM\) aph' humon sun pase kakia.](#)

**BGT** π σα πικρ α κα θυμ ς κα ργ κα κραυγ κα βλασφημ α ρθ τω φ μ ν σ ν π σ κακ .

**Amplified:** Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath (passion, rage, bad temper) and resentment (anger, animosity) and quarreling (brawling, clamor, contention) and slander (evil-speaking, abusive or blasphemous language) be banished from you, with all malice (spite, ill will, or baseness of any kind). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#) - original edition)

**Barclay:** Let all bitterness. all outbreaks of passion, all long-lived anger, all loud talking, all insulting language be removed from you with all evil. ([Ephesians 4](#))

**BBE** Let all bitter, sharp and angry feeling, and noise, and evil words, be put away from you, with all unkind acts;

**Caird** - 'silently harboured grudge, indignant outburst, seething rage, public quarrel and slanderous taunt.'

**CSB** All bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice.

**ESV** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

**GWN** Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred.

**Hoehner:** "Let every kind of bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and abusive speech together with every kind of malice be put away from you.

**KJV** Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

**NKJ** Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

**NLT:** Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NLT (revised)** Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior.

**NRS** Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice,

**NET** You must put away every kind of bitterness, anger, wrath, quarreling, and evil, slanderous talk.

**NIV** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

**NAB** All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice.

**NJB** Any bitterness or bad temper or anger or shouting or abuse must be far removed from you -- as must every kind of malice.

**Phillips:** Let there be no more resentment, no more anger or temper, no more violent self-assertiveness, no more slander and no more malicious remarks, ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** All manner of harshness and violent outbreaks of wrath and anger and brawling and slanderous speech, let it be put away from you together with all manner of malice. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by [permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** Let all bitterness and all passionate feeling, all anger and loud insulting language, be unknown among you—and also every kind of malice.

**LET ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH AND ANGER AND CLAMOR AND SLANDER BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU: pasa pikria kai thumos kai orge kai krauge kai blasphemia artheto (3SAPM) aph' humon:**

- **Let all bitterness** .Ps 64:3; Ro 3:14; Col 3:8,19; Jas 3:14,15
- **and wrath and anger** Ep 4:26; Pr 14:17; 19:12; Eccl 7:9; 2Co 12:20; Gal 5:20; Col 3:8; 2Ti 2:23; Titus 1:7; Jas 1:19; 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 4:1,2
- **and clamor** 2Sa 19:43; 20:1,2; Pr 29:9,22; Acts 19:28,29; 21:30; 22:22,23; 1Ti 3:3; 1Ti 6:4,5
- **and slander be put away from you**, Lv 19:16; 2Sa 19:27; Ps 15:3; 50:20; 101:5; 140:11; Pr 6:19; 10:18; Pr 18:8; 25:23; 26:20; Je 6:28; 9:4; Ro 1:29,30; 1Ti 3:11; 5:13; 2Ti 3:3; Titus 2:3; 3:2; Jas 4:11; 1Pe 2:1; 2Pe 2:10,11; Jude 1:8, 9, 10; Re 12:10
- [Ephesians 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 4:17-32 Solving Conflicts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 4:28-32](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 4:28-29: A Brand New Way of Life - 4](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 4:25-32 Principles of New Life](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 4:17-5:14 Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

### NEW GRACE CLOTHES FOR OLD GRAVE CLOTHES

The Greek word for **bitterness** is [pikra](#) which gives us our English term [picric acid](#) which is "an organic compound with the formula (O<sub>2</sub>N)<sub>3</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>2</sub>OH. Its IUPAC name is **2,4,6-trinitrophenol (TNP)**. The name "**picric**" comes from the Greek word πικρός (*pikros*), meaning "bitter", due to its bitter taste. It is one of the most acidic phenols. Like other strongly [nitrated](#) organic compounds, **picric acid is an explosive**, which is its primary use." Isn't that interesting! Even as the chemical picric acid is an explosive which destroys things, so too is human [pikra](#) which destroys relationships (and unity in the body - contra Eph 4:3+) and even destroys the "container" that dispenses this acidic attitude! It follows that it is personally dangerous to let bitterness fester into a destructive force! If you have resentment, don't cover it up, but confess it "upward" to God, because "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (Pr 28:13+)

**Let all bitterness (pikra) and wrath** (see [thumos](#)) **and anger** (see [orge](#) of use in Ep 4:26+) **and clamor** (see [krauge](#)) **and slander** (see [blasphemia](#)) **be put away** (see below on [airo](#)) (Greek adds preposition [apo](#) to emphasize the putting is to be very far away from!) - Note **all (pas)** means **all** without exception (do you need to do a little "temple" cleaning? see Ps 139:23,24). **All** of these are in some way related to forms of anger. Note how the vice list begins with "inner" sin an proceeds to outer manifestations. Notice also how "**all**" is used like a "spiritual bookend" at the beginning and the end of this exhortation to put away "all sorts of, every kind of, every form of" these noxious ethical elements from our daily conduct (**all** 6 of these "poisonous" weeds!). So why **put bitterness all away**? We need to be very careful not to nurse a grudge for it can grow into **root of bitterness**. Even a "*little*" bitterness is like leaven and it spreads and defiles (Heb 12:15+). **Put away** (enabled by the Spirit, Who is grieved by this sin) that old rotten garment of **bitterness** which is that spirit of resentment that refuses to be reconciled. **Put away** the "**grave clothes**" (Eph 4:22+ Col 3:9+) and put on the "**grace clothes**" (Eph 4:24+, Col 3:8+, Col 3:9+, Col 3:12+) These dirty clothes must be discarded because they grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30+) and disturb the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3+).

**Hendriksen - Bitterness** is the disposition of the person with a tongue sharp as an arrow, keen as a razor. He resents his neighbor, and so he "needles" him, is ever ready to "fly off the handle" with a reply that bites or stings. ([Ephesians](#))

**Eadie - Pikria** in this verse denotes that fretted and irritable state of mind that keeps a man in perpetual animosity, that inclines him to harsh and uncharitable opinions of men and things, that makes him sour, crabby, repulsive in his general demeanor, that brings a scowl over his face and infuses the words of his tongue with venom. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary](#))

**Lehman Strauss** - Bitter words and actions show that the heart is not right, for only the mouth of the unrighteous is full of bitterness (Ro 3:14+). Believers must take heed "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb 12:15+). No fountain can send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter. Therefore, if we have bitter envying and strife in our hearts, it is earthly, sensual and devilish (James 3:11-15+). **Clamour** is the audible expression of anger, wrath, and bitterness in the heart. It is the cry of one's passions in railing against others while asserting one's own rights. All evil speaking must be put away, with all malice. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren" (James 4:11). Yes, dear Christian, let it all be put away from you. Put away

bitterness. Put away wrath. Put away anger. Put away clamour. Put away evil speaking. Put away all malice. These things defile the believer even as commercialism defiled the temple in our Lord's day, so that He said to them that sold doves: "Take ([airo](#) in [aorist imperative](#)) these things hence" (John 2:16+).

**Bitterness** reflects a smoldering resentment, a harsh feeling, a brooding grudge-filled attitude, an unwillingness to forgive or a harsh feeling. **Bitterness** is the opposite of sweetness and kindness (cf. husbands toward wives in Col 3:19+, where we see the "preventative" or antithesis of bitterness is to **love** one's wife unconditionally!). The bitter person harbors resentment and even "keeps score" of wrongs (cf 1Co 13:5+)! **ILLUSTRATION** - Don't be like the man who literally kept a book in which he recorded the wrongs done against him - needless to say he was miserable! Love doesn't keep score because love has a bad memory. Supernatural Spirit wrought love (Gal 5:22+) seeks to cover a multitude of sins. (1Pe 4:8+)

Bitterness does not have to do with how we taste but how we react!

**Skevington** rightly says that "Pikria is the opposite not only of sweetness (gleuketes) but of kindness (chrestotes). It is the spite that harbors resentment and keeps a score of wrongs. Aristotle defined those who display it as "hard to be reconciled" (Nicomachean Ethics 4.11). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**POSB on bitterness** - There is bitterness (pikria): resentment, harshness. A man who is bitter is often sharp, resentful, cynical, cold, harsh, stressful, intense, relentless, distasteful, unpleasant. Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace and to express such. Anything less than the expression of these three is sin. (See [Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible-KJV-Galatians-Colossians](#))

Bitterness is the curse of life, it is the main cause of trouble in all relationships.

-- Martyn Lloyd-Jones

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** astutely observes that "**Bitterness** is the curse of life, it is the main cause of trouble in all relationships. All men's efforts to solve the problems are hampered by bitterness. It is found on both sides of the disputes. You find it in the demagogue who often represents the servants. He desires to improve conditions, and rightly so, but he rarely attempts to do so without producing a great deal of bitterness. And there is equal bitterness on the other side. Men can never solve these problems because each man is out for himself, and sees his own side only. Bitterness arises because of selfishness: that is the very opposite of being filled with the Spirit. But when men are filled with the Spirit on both sides of a dispute there is hope of solving it because both are animated and governed by a common desire. ([Our Master in Heaven: A sermon on Ephesians 6:5-9](#))

**Steven Cole** - **Bitterness** develops over time as we nurse our anger and tell ourselves that we have good cause to be angry. We play the situation where we got angry over and over in our minds, often blaming the other person and justifying ourselves. The bitter person refuses to forgive or be reconciled. He wants to make the other person pay. (**ILLUSTRATION**) Bitter people keep score. I once counseled a woman who pulled out a notebook with 16 pages detailing every major wrong that her husband had committed against her over the years. She thought that she had an airtight case that justified her anger. I glanced at it and said, "The first thing you need to do is to burn this notebook!" She didn't like that advice!

**Barclay** adds that "the Greeks defined (**pikría**) as long-standing resentment, as the spirit which refuses to be reconciled (**ED** Aristotle spoke of as 'the resentful spirit which refuses reconciliation'). So many of us have a way of nursing our wrath to keep it warm, of brooding over the insults and the injuries which we have received. Every Christian might well pray that God would teach him how to forget (**Ed**: Or better yet to forgive every time the "injurious thoughts" bombard one's mind - here's a verse to help you do that - Ro 8:6+ - memorize it, meditate on it, then empowered by the Spirit practice it! You will be living in the "new garment!".") ([Ephesians 4 Commentary](#))

The problem with many of us as Christians is not what we are eating, but it's what is eating us!

--Wayne Barber

**Warren Wiersbe** has a practical comment on "**bitterness**" to which any saint can fall prey - "An unforgiving spirit is the **devil's playground** and before long it becomes the **Christian's battleground**. If somebody hurts us, either deliberately or unintentionally, and we do not forgive him, then we begin to develop bitterness within, which hardens the heart (cp Mt 6:12, 14, 15+). We should be tenderhearted and kind, but instead we are hardhearted and bitter. Actually, we are not hurting the person who hurt us; we are only hurting ourselves. **Bitterness in the heart makes us treat others the way Satan treats them, when we should treat others the way God has treated us**. In His gracious kindness, God has forgiven us, and we should forgive others. We do not forgive for our sake (though we do get a blessing from it) or even for their sake, but for Jesus' sake. Learning how to forgive and forget is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life. (See [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#):) (Bolding added)

**John Phillips** - What an ugly accumulation of human characteristics! They sour our lives, scald our brethren, stain our characters, spoil our testimonies, and sadden the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be more grieving to the Holy Spirit than a bitter, resentful spirit.

Bitterness soured the soul of Simon Magus (Acts 8:23+) when Philip preached Christ in Samaria, and showed that Simon's profession of faith was utterly false. (See [Exploring Ephesians & Philippians: An Expository Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** points out that "These particular sins involve conflict between person and person—believer and unbeliever and, worse still, between believer and believer. These are the sins that break fellowship and destroy relationships, that weaken the church and mar its testimony before the world. When an unbeliever sees Christians acting just like the rest of society, the church is blemished in his eyes and he is confirmed still further in resisting the claims of the gospel." (See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**Gregory Brown** - Obviously, if we are going to stop from going down the path to brawling and malice, we must stop it at the heart level. We must repent of bitterness—feelings of resentment that lead to wrath and anger. Again, Christ taught that anger is the seed that leads to murder (cf. Matt 5:21-22+). Are you bitter or angry? Repent before God and ask him to give you a right heart—one that loves him and people.

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**John Eadie** on this "dirty laundry list"...

All feelings inconsistent with love—all emotions opposed to the benign influence and presence of the Divine Spirit—were to be abandoned.

**Wrath** ([thumos](#)) is that mental excitement to which such bitterness gives rise—the commotion or tempest that heaves and infuriates within

**Anger** ([orge](#)) (Deut. 9:19) is resentment, settled and dark hostility, and is therefore condemned.

**Clamour** ([krauge](#)) is the expression of this anger—hoarse reproach, the high language of scorn and scolding, the yelling tones, the loud and boisterous recrimination, and the fierce and impetuous invective that mark a man in a towering rage. *Ira furor brevis est.* "Let women," adds Chrysostom, "especially attend to this, as they on every occasion cry out and brawl. There is but one thing in which it is needful to cry aloud, and that is in teaching and preaching."

**Slander** ([blasphemia](#)) signifies what is hurtful to the reputation of others, and sometimes is applied to the sin of impious speech toward God. It is the result or one phase of the clamour implied in [krauge](#) (clamor), for anger leads not only to vituperation, but to calumny and scandal. In the intensity of passion, hot and hasty rebuke easily and frequently passes into foulest slander. The wrathful denouncer exhausts his rage by becoming a reviler. Col. 3:8; 1Ti 6:4. All these vicious emotions are to be put away.

**Evil** ([kakia](#)) is a generic term, and seems to signify what we sometimes call in common speech bad-heartedness, the root of all those vices. 1Pe 2:1.

Let all these vices be abandoned, with every form and aspect of that condition of mind in which they have their origin, and of that residuum which the indulgence of them leaves behind it. The word is in contrast with the epithet, "tender-hearted," in the following verse. Now this verse contains not only a catalogue, but a melancholy genealogy of bad passions—acerbity of temper exciting passion—that passion heated into indignation—that indignation throwing itself off in indecent brawling, and that brawling darkening into libel and abuse—a malicious element lying all the while at the basis of these enormities. And such unamiable feeling and language are not to be allowed any apology or indulgence. The adjective "**all**" belongs to the five sins first mentioned... Indeed, the Coptic version formally prefixes to all the nouns the adjective —"all." They are to be put away in every kind and degree—in germ as well as maturity—without reserve and without compromise. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary](#))

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**Bitterness** ([4088](#)) ([pikra](#) from [pikrós](#) = pointed, sharp, "pungent" smell, "penetrating" pain, "piercing" sound, from [pik-](#) = to cut, prick) originally meant pointed or sharp, as describing arrows, and then more figuratively of what is "sharp" or "penetrating" to the senses, a bitter, pungent taste or smell and finally what is "painful" to the feelings. This is the person with a chip on both shoulders. "When someone is irritable, they are sour and venomous and they have lost their smile. People often speak of it as a sour spirit and sour speech." ([Gordon](#)) It is the opposite of sweetness and suggests acrid, sharp, severe, sarcastic. This gives us our English word [Picric acid](#) which as noted above is an explosive compound! This is not a bad picture of the potential impact that bitterness can have on the one who retains it and the one on whom it is "poured!" (See also related verb [pikraino](#))

**Pikria** - 4x in 4v - Acts 8:23; Ro 3:14+; Eph 4:31; Heb 12:15+.

In Acts **Peter** confronts Simon the sorcerer declaring "I see that you (Simon) are in the gall of **bitterness** and in the bondage of iniquity" (Acts 8:23+).

**Comment** - Observe the context in Acts 8:13+ which says "**Simon himself believed**" but his subsequent actions and Peter's assessment make it clear that this was **not belief unto salvation** but was intellectual

and/or a belief only in the signs and wonders. Do not be deceived! As **Spurgeon** said "Sin is the gall of bitterness; a drop of it would turn an ocean of pleasure into wormwood." **Tozer** adds "I think there is little doubt that the teaching of salvation without repentance has lowered the moral standards of the Church and produced a multitude of deceived religious professors who erroneously believe themselves to be saved when in fact they are still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity."

Romans 3:14+ (THIS IS THE OLD GARMENT OF THE OLD MAN IN ADAM!) "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

Hebrews 12:15+ (NOTE THE DEADLY POISON SPREAD BY BITTERNESS - IT WILL DESTROY A BODY INCLUDING THE BODY OF CHRIST!!!) **See to it** ([episkopeco](#) in the present tense = to be our habitual practice) that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

**THOUGHT** on "**See to it**" - Note the verb "**see to it**" -- From the English translation I thought "**see to it**" was a command but to my surprise it is present tense but this still describes the general bent (strong inclination) of our mind (our mindset - see 2 directions we can "bend" our mind and the consequences in Ro 8:6+) which is (or at least should be) ever toward the transforming power of the **grace of God** dispensed by the **Spirit of Grace** (Heb 10:29b+). The purpose is that no root of bitterness might spring up. Oh how we all need to daily depend on the Holy Spirit to enable us to fight off the seductive tendency toward the unholy behavior of becoming bitter or resentful at some wrong or injury done to us by another (saint or not). **See to it** in the present tense is clearly something we can do only by continually being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+, cf Eph 3:16+, Eph 3:20b+). So I think as you look at many of the exhortations/instructions in Scripture, especially when they are in the present tense (calling for a lifestyle or habitual practice), you can begin to see our desperate need for the continual filling by the Spirit. And this is why I say I think we are more often filled with Him than we might think -- e.g., someone says something wrong, injurious, hurtful to us and yet "*somehow*" we don't respond, react or begin to nurse a grudge! How is that possible? That's the point - it is **IM-possible**, but praise God it is **HIM-possible** - the Spirit has just demonstrated that He is in us, filling us, controlling us, empowering us to wear the "new garment" of Jesus Christ! Indeed, unto "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Amen? Amen!

**Pikria** - 19v in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)**- Ex 15:23 (pikria translates [marah](#) from marar - to be bitter - cf Nu 33:8-9); Dt 29:18; Dt 32:32 (= bitter taste); (**Observe the concentration of figurative meaning of bitter/bitterness in the Book of Job!**) Job 3:20; 7:11; 9:18; 10:1; 21:25; Ps 10:7; 14:3; Isa 28:21, 28; 37:29; Jer 2:21; 15:17; Lam 3:15, Lam 3:19 (= a good prayer! Note what happened La 3:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27!); Ezek 28:24; Amos 6:12;

**Pikria** was used literally to describe plants that produced inedible (bitter tasting) or poisonous fruit. Greeks defined this word as **long-standing resentment**, as the **spirit which refuses to be reconciled**. (think of it as synonymous with the deadly poison of an unforgiving spirit!) So many of us have a way of nursing our wrath to keep it warm, of brooding over the insults and the injuries which we have received.

In the NT **pikria** is used in a metaphorical sense to describe animosity, resentfulness, harshness or an openly-expressed emotional hostility against an enemy. **Pikria** defines a settled hostility that **poisons** the whole inner man (it does more damage to the one who is bitter, than to the intended "victim!"). Somebody does something we do not like, so we harbor ill will against him. Bitterness leads to wrath, which is the explosion on the outside of the feelings on the inside.

In the first use of **pikria** in the OT (Septuagint - LXX) Moses records - And when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were **bitter** (pikria); therefore it was named Marah. (Ex 15:23)

**Pikria** or **bitterness** is the spirit of irritability that keeps a person in perpetual animosity, making him sour and venomous. Bitterness applies to the bitterness of spirit to which men give vent by bitter words.

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about bitterness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is a root of bitterness? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Who/what is Marah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

### A. Kinds of:

The heart Pr 14:10

Death 1Sa 15:32

### B. Causes of:

Childlessness 1Sa 1:5, 10

A foolish son Pr 17:25

Sickness Is 38:17

### C. Avoidance of:

Toward others Ep 4:31

As a source of defilement He 12:15

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**ISBE** has this note on **bitterness**...

1. the physical sense of taste;
  2. a figurative meaning in the objective sense of cruel, biting words; intense misery resulting from forsaking God, from a life of sin and impurity; the misery of servitude; the misfortunes of bereavement;
  3. more subjectively, bitter and bitterness describe emotions of sympathy; the sorrow of childlessness and of penitence, of disappointment; the feeling of misery and wretchedness, giving rise to the expression "bitter tears";
  4. the ethical sense, characterizing untruth and immorality as the bitter thing in opposition to the sweetness of truth and the gospel;
  5. Numbers 5:18+ the Revised Version (British and American) speaks of "the water of bitterness that causeth the curse." Here it is employed as a technical term.
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**Martyn Lloyd-Jones on bitterness** - He starts with the word bitterness, 'Let all bitterness be put away.' Bitterness is a state of the spirit. It denotes a sort of persistent sourness and an absence of amiability. It is an unloving condition. Indeed, it is a condition which never sees any good in anything, but always contrives to see something wrong, or some defect and deficiency. The proverb tells us that 'All seems yellow to the jaundiced eye', and the same is true about bitterness of spirit. It puts into everything it looks at some unworthy element. Because the person himself is jaundiced and bitter, everything he looks at is tinged by the same thing; it is like looking through coloured spectacles. The Apostle brings this out in many places, as for example in the third chapter of his letter to Titus, 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' We need not stay with this. I would remind you that we have already had ample opportunity for seeing the sham, and the pretence and the veneer which the world puts on. It gives a wonderful expression of affability, while the fact is that behind the paint and the powder there is nothing but bitterness, the result of brooding upon wrongs, either real or imaginary. We are all bitter by nature when in an unregenerate state; for which reason, as Christians, we have to put it away from us. I grant that there may be genuine grievances; but what makes us bitter is that we ponder them and meditate upon them and stay with them; in other words, we nurse our grievances, we dwell on them, we pay great attention to them, and if we are tending to forget them we deliberately bring them back and allow them to work us up again into a state of bitterness. But, of course, this happens not only with real grievances; many grievances are purely imaginary, and have no real substance at all, but because we have become bitter we see them where they really are not, and we nurse them, and, in turn, become more and more bitter. **Bitterness**, then, describes the kind of life which has become sour; it is not ready to believe good of anybody or anything, but always ready to believe evil; it is always somewhat cynical, takes the glory out of everything, tries to spoil everything. When it is shown something beautiful, it does not praise the ninety-nine per cent that is beautiful but always points to the one per cent of defect. We all know the kind of individual who is always pointing out the troubles and the defects and the faults and the blemishes. There are many such people. Every preacher, I am sure, could name them. There are some people who never write and thank you for sermons, but if you should by a mere slip of the tongue say something wrong they write to you about it. It is the only time they do write. The bitter spirit sees the faults and the blemishes but never seems to see the good. I do not want to stop with this. There are, of course, many people who feel that they have had good cause for being bitter; there were many people in the two World Wars who lost a husband or an only son. It is very easy to understand how they have become bitter with regard to the whole of life; but it does not excuse it, it is

wrong, they should never have allowed themselves to become bitter. They have been dealt certain hard blows by life, but that is no justification for bitterness or for sourness or for becoming cynical. Even if life is described to them at its best, their very expression lets you know that they are not really disposed to allow themselves to enjoy anything. The saddest people I know in this world are these bitter people; they make themselves miserable and for the time being they make everybody else miserable. It is a terrible thing to be nursing a grievance, real or imaginary. Put it away from you, says Paul, put it away from you; that is the old man, that is the pagan, that is the unregenerate world, it should never appear in the Christian. (Forgiven and Forgiving - no Mp3 available)

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**Helen Grace Lesheid writing on on bitterness** - It grows. It distorts reality. It keeps us chained to the past. Like bad air, it pollutes not just the bitter person, but those who come in contact with the person (He 12:15). (Breaking Free from Bitterness - Discipleship Journal, Vol 14, No. 6, Nov/Dec 1994)

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Self-pity weeps on the devil's shoulder, turning to Satan for comfort. His invitation is: "Come unto me all you that are grieved, peeved, misused, and disgruntled, and I will spread on the sympathy. You will find me a never-failing source of the meanest attitudes and the most selfish sort of misery. At my altar you may feel free to fail and fall, and there to sigh and fret. There I will feed your soul on fears, and indulge your ego with envy and jealousy, **bitterness** and spite. There I will excuse you from every cross, duty, and hardship, and permit you to yield unto temptation." (From Green, M. P. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching)

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**The Cure for Bitterness is a Heavenly Vision** (Pun intended) - The story of the blind songwriter [Fanny Crosby](#) ([Click for additional bio and links to many of her hymns](#)) who wrote more than 8,000 songs is a powerful example of a heart that refused to let the seeds of bitterness and unforgiveness germinate. When Fanny was only 6 weeks old a minor eye inflammation developed and as some tell the story, the doctor who treated her was a quack and the potion he prescribed resulted in her becoming totally and permanently blind! Talk about having a reason to be bitter! And yet this Spirit filled woman harbored no bitterness against the physician and was quoted as having said of him

If I could meet him now, I would say thank you, over and over again for making me blind.

Indeed Fanny Crosby considered her blindness to be a gift from God to help her write the 8000 hymns that flowed so freely from her pen. Warren Wiersbe in commenting on Fanny's life wrote that...

It was said of another blind hymn writer, [George Matheson](#), that God made him blind so he could see clearly in other ways and become a guide to men. This same tribute could be applied to Fanny Crosby, who triumphed over her handicap and used it to the glory of God. (Editorial comment: Here are words from his most popular hymn)

**[O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go](#)**

I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

And so when God allowed life to give Fanny Crosby "lemons", instead of choosing bitterness, she turned the lemons into some of the sweetest hymns ever penned! In short, Fanny filled with the Spirit and the grace of God, turned tragedy into triumph, becoming better instead of bitter! May her tribe increase!

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English essayist and critic Charles Lamb (1775–1834) once commented about a person he did not want to meet:

"Don't introduce me to that man. I want to go on hating him, and I can't hate someone I know." Our Daily Bread

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Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.

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Myth: "You must forget in order to forgive." Truth: Forgiving is not forgetting. The key is how it is remembered.... Forgiving is remembering without bitterness, hatred or resentment (June Hunt - Biblical Counseling Keys - Biblical Counseling Keys)

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**Bitterness** always inflicts a deeper wound on the person who harbors it than the person against whom it is directed. A man who had car trouble on a lonely road asked a farmer to tow him to the nearest garage. On the way his wife was protesting to her husband the fee the farmer charged. "It is scandalous," she said, "to charge us ten dollars for towing this car only three miles." To which her husband replied, "Never mind, dear. I'm having my revenge—I've got my brakes on." Many a person has thought himself to be getting revenge, but all the time the major damage was being done to him. (Speaker's Quote Book)

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**Spurgeon** - A few angry words have embittered the friendship of a life. A few bitter sentences have destroyed the usefulness of a sweet sermon, and even of a sweet life.

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Robert Louis Stevenson, in his Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh, tells the story of two unmarried sisters who shared a single room. As people are apt to do who live in close quarters, the sisters had a falling out, which Stevenson says was "on some point of controversial divinity." In other words, they disagreed over some aspect of theology. **The controversy was so bitter that they never spoke again (ever!).** There were no words, either kind or spiteful — just silence. Nevertheless, possibly because of a lack of means, or because of the innate Scottish fear of scandal, they continued to keep house together in the single room. A chalk-line was drawn across the floor to separate their two domains. For years they coexisted in hateful silence. Each woman's meals, baths, and family visitors were exposed to the other's unfriendly silence. At night each went to bed listening to the heavy breathing of her enemy. Thus, the two sisters (ostensibly daughters of the Church!) continued the rest of their miserable lives. They probably were not true Christians, because Christians are not to resist reconciliation and forgiveness. ([Hughes, R. K.: Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ. Crossway Books](#))

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**The Burden of Bitterness** - Luis Palau writes...A friend of mine went through a massive emotional breakdown. After his recovery, we went for a walk. "Luis," he told me, "don't ever allow anyone to make you bitter."

He told me about his breakdown which proved very embarrassing.

"My problems began when I got so worked up about the contractor who didn't build my basement and driveway right. I hated what he'd done to my home. And since he lived next door, I saw him almost daily. Each time I saw him, my anger and bitterness grew even more intense until I finally cracked."

No wonder God's Word is so emphatic: "Get rid of all bitterness" (Ephesians 4:31). Why? Because if a "bitter root grows up" within you, it will "cause trouble and defile many" (Hebrews 12:15). ([Luis Palau: How to Renew Your Spiritual Passion, Discovery House, October, 1994](#))

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**Purge Out The Poison** - My friend and I were standing in the parking lot of a restaurant where we had just finished lunch. While we were discussing the damage a bitter spirit can cause, he took out his New Testament and solemnly read Hebrews 12:15 to me: "Looking carefully . . . lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

In the six long decades since our conversation, the sad truth of that warning has been repeatedly verified by my experiences in pastoral ministry. Bitterness is a poison, and if not purged out by prayer, confession, and forgiveness, it does great emotional damage and destroys relationships. A little grudge that festers can become a devastating malignancy of soul. That's why the advice in Hebrews must be diligently heeded.

Have you been holding fast to the memory of some insult, some event, some criticism? As Paul put it in Ephesians 4:26note, "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath." Take the proper steps to resolve the problem right away.

Holding a grudge poisons our spiritual lives. With the Holy Spirit's help, let's uproot any bitterness right now. It's amazing how joyful our lives will be when we allow God to purge out the poison of bitterness. --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### Thinking It Through

What are we to do when someone sins against us? (Lk. 17:3, 4). According to Jesus, how many times are we to forgive? (Mt. 18:21, 22).

To get rid of weeds of anger,  
dig out the bitter roots.



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**Sunk by Own Attack** ([USS Tang in Wikipedia](#)) - During World War II the U.S. submarine Tang surfaced under the cover of darkness to fire upon a large Japanese convoy off the coast of China. Since previous raids had left the American vessel with only eight torpedoes, the accuracy of every shot was absolutely essential. The first seven missiles were right on target; but when the eighth was launched, it suddenly deviated and headed right back at their own ship. The emergency alarm to submerge rang out, but it was too late. Within a matter of seconds the U.S. sub received a direct hit and sank almost instantly. Instead of doing battle with the enemy, Christians often use God's Word like a torpedo to attack one another. With precisely aimed missiles of criticism, contempt, or callousness, we can cripple the body of Christ, of which we are all members. You cannot sink someone else's end of the boat and still keep your own afloat. (Ed: "Amen" or "Oh my"!)

In much the same way we can destroy ourselves by our enmity and hostility directed toward others. The effects of holding a grudge are very serious. In fact, modern medicine has shown that emotions such as bitterness and anger can cause problems such as headaches, backaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, even contributing to the increased incidence of heart attacks, etc. When we do not love our enemies (Mt 5:44-note where "**love**" = present imperative - keep on loving them in effect "70 x 7"! ) but strike back at them, we are usurping God's prerogative to mete out justice (Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note). When we seek to take our own revenge, beloved, we in effect are aiming the torpedo at our own heart and are sure to incur severe damage ourselves. For the sake of God's Holy Name and the forgiveness wrought in our behalf by the Cross of Christ, may the Spirit give each of us the necessary desire and power in the "knick of time" so that we think before we act in haste and hatred. Amen (Quoted in part by [Lenya Heitzig and Penny Rose - Pathway to Living Faith James](#))

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**A Little Grudge** - A little grudge can create a huge gap in human relationships. The Philippines Daily Express reported on a couple in England who had lived together as "silent partners" for 12 years. The wife was finally seeking a divorce. "For 12 extraordinary years they had lived their lives so that they wouldn't have to meet each other," said lawyer Simon King, who was handling the case. "When one would come into the house, the other would leave. And when they did communicate with each other, it was with notes." They had lived happily together for the first 18 years of their marriage and had raised a son. For the last 12 years, however, they didn't speak to each other. Ironically, neither one could remember what the hassle had been all about.

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**Good Dads** - Columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. grew up with a father he describes as physically present but emotionally absent. In his first book on parenting, Pitts openly chronicles his struggle to come to terms with his alcoholic father and the climate of fear he had created in their home. Pitts challenges all men to resolve the resentment toward their absent or abusive fathers instead of passing it on to the next generation.

There's a passage in Hebrews 12 that applies to all Christians, but it has special relevance to dads. It reads:

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (He 12:14, 15)

Think of what could happen in our families if we emptied our hearts of bitterness and made peaceful relationships our goal! If we have been blessed with a wise and loving father, we should be grateful and follow his example. But if our father has failed us, we must rely on God's grace, resolve our anger toward him, and strive to be the kind of dad we never had. It won't be easy, but with our heavenly Father as a perfect example, we can learn to be good dads. —David C. McCasland ([Ibid](#))

A faithful father leads by love  
With tender firmness from above,  
For he himself has learned from God  
The lessons of His chastening rod. --DJD

**A good father reflects  
the love of the heavenly Father.**

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**Hunt** (Biblical Counseling Keys) has these insights on **bitterness**...

Resentment toward God and those who have not fulfilled your expectations will grow bitter roots that destroy acceptance of yourself and others.

If you don't forgive, you will develop a root of bitterness and **abitter root** will grow **bitter fruit**... You will become bitter.

Unresolved anger produces bitterness. And the Bible links bitterness with being in bondage to sin. (Acts 8:23)

Give the situation to God. Jesus understands how much you have been wronged. When He was being persecuted, Jesus knew that the heavenly Father would judge justly... in His way, in His time. And you can know the same. Your trial will make you either bitter or better.

Following conflict, what keeps your heart from a negative focus? Jesus said, "Love your enemies."...If you are saying, "but they really aren't enemies," realize that if someone evokes resentment, bitterness, or hatred, that person is an enemy to your spirit. Because praying for your enemy is commanded by Christ, believers should obey this directive and not regard this as optional. And because praying for your enemy protects your heart from bitterness, you should want to obey this directive in heart and in deed. One approach is to pray "the fruit of the Spirit" for your offender. And because you are willing to "bless" your enemy, the Bible says that you will inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:9)

**Wrath** (2372) (**thumos** from **thúo** = move impetuously, particularly as the air or wind, a violent motion or passion of the mind; move violently, rush along) describes passion (as if breathing hard) and so speaks of an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. It speaks of a feeling of antagonism which bursts forth in a tumultuous outburst, a hot retort. **Thumos** is a tumultuous welling up of the whole spirit; a mighty emotion which seizes and moves the whole inner man.

**Sam Gordon** - Rage (thymos) is the 'in' word these days—we talk about road rage, air rage, and every other form of rage that is possible. The Greeks defined thymos as the kind of anger which is like the flame which comes from straw—it quickly blazes up and just as quickly subsides. In this context it has to do with wild rage, the passion of the moment resulting in an explosion from within. It is when we boil up and boil over. When people blow it big time—it is over in a moment but they leave a lasting legacy of scars.

**Thumos** - 18x in 18v - Luke 4:28; Acts 19:28; Rom 2:8; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Heb 11:27; Rev 12:12; 14:8, 10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 18:3; 19:15. **NAS** = angry tempers(1), fierce(2), indignation(1), outbursts of anger(1), passion(2), rage(2), wrath(9).

As noted above the root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage. **Thumos** is a blaze of sudden anger which is quickly kindled and just as quickly dies. The Greeks likened it to a fire amongst straw, which quickly blazed and just as quickly burned itself out. It is used by the writer of Hebrews to describe Pharaoh's murderous fury at Moses (Heb 11:27-note; cf. Ex 10:28). It is used by Luke to describe the fury of the Jews in the synagogue at Nazareth who wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff (Lk 4:28,29). It is used of the pagan Ephesians who resented Paul's preaching the gospel and especially his claim that their idols "made with hands [were] no gods at all" (Acts 19:26, 17, 28). On the final day of judgment God's indignation will explode like a consuming fire upon all rebellious mankind. It is one of the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:20-note), and it is not acceptable behavior for Christians here in Ephesians 4:31!

**Anger** (3709) (**orge** from **orgaō** = to teem, to swell) refers to an inner, deep resentment that seethes and smolders, and thus is a more settled indignation. **Orge** as used of God refers to His constant and controlled indignation toward sin, while **thumos** (which originally referred to violent movements of air, water, etc., and consequently came to mean "well up" or "boil up") refers more to a passionate outburst of rage. **Thumos** type anger represents an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage! **Orge** is more subtle, deep flowing anger. It is a subtle, deep-flowing, persistent antagonism against someone. Recall that **orge** refers to righteous anger (Eph 4:26) as with Jesus' righteous anger (Mark 3:5+) and is used of God's wrath (Jn 3:36+; Ro 1:18+; Ro 12:19+), expressing His holy settled hatred and opposition to sin!

**Sam Gordon** - **Anger** (orgē) is when everything is left on the back burner to simmer. It is a nurtured feeling of hatred that stems from deep within. On the outside, all may seem relatively calm—on the inside, the tempest is beginning to rage. It is a settled and sullen hostility. A touch of pique! We need to know that a hostile Christian is an oxymoron!

**F. F. Bruce** observes "This mention of anger (Eph 4:31) as something that is bad without qualification, so soon after Eph 4:26, suggests that to be angry without sinning is as rare as it is difficult."

**Orge** - 36x in 34v - anger(6), wrath(30). Matt 3:7; Mark 3:5; Luke 3:7; 21:23; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4f; Eph 2:3; 4:31; 5:6; Col 3:6, 8; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; 1 Tim 2:8; Heb 3:11; 4:3; Jas 1:19f; Rev 6:16f; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15

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**ANGER CAN SPREAD:** In the spring of 1894, the Baltimore Orioles came to Boston to play a routine baseball game. But what happened that day was anything but routine. The Orioles' John McGraw got into a fight with the Boston third baseman. Within minutes all the players from both teams had joined in the brawl. The warfare quickly spread to the grandstands. Among the fans the conflict went from bad to worse. Someone set fire to the stands and the entire ballpark burned to the ground. Not only that, but the fire spread to 107 other Boston buildings as well.

**ANGER CAN BE FATAL:** The 18th-century British physician John Hunter, who was a pioneer in the field of surgery and served as surgeon to King George III, suffered from angina. Discovering that his attacks were often brought on by anger, Hunter lamented, "My life is at the mercy of any scoundrel who chooses to put me in a passion." These words proved prophetic, for at a meeting of the board of St. George's Hospital in London, Hunter got into a heated argument with other board members, walked out, and dropped dead in the next room. (Today in the Word)

**ANOTHER EXAMPLE:** National park ranger in British Columbia who has a two sets of huge antlers, as wide as a man's reach; ;locked together. Evidently two bull moose began fighting, their antlers locked, and they could not get free. They died due to anger.

A lady once came to Billy Sunday and tried to rationalize her angry outbursts. "There's nothing wrong with losing my temper," She said. "I blow up, and then it's all over." "So does a shotgun," Sunday replied, "and look at the damage it leaves behind!" Getting angry can sometimes be like leaping into a wonderfully responsive sports car, gunning the motor, taking off at high speed and then discovering the brakes are out of order.

**WAGES OF UNCONTROLLED ANGER:** Jim Taylor in CURRENTS tells the following story about his friend, Ralph Milton: One morning Ralph woke up at five o'clock to a noise that sounded like someone repairing boilers on his roof. Still in his pajamas, he went into the back yard to investigate. He found a woodpecker on the TV antenna, "pounding its little brains out on the metal pole." Angry at the little creature who ruined his sleep, Ralph picked up a rock and threw it. The rock sailed over the house, and he heard a distant crash as it hit the car. In utter disgust, Ralph took a vicious kick at a clod of dirt, only to remember -- too late -- that he was still in his bare feet. Uncontrolled anger, as Ralph learned, can sometimes be its own reward.

**TEMPERING ANGER:** Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, was angered by an army officer who accused him of favoritism. Stanton complained to Lincoln, who suggested that Stanton write the officer a sharp letter. Stanton did, and showed the strongly worded missive to the president. "What are you going to do with it?" Lincoln inquired. Surprised, Stanton replied, "Send it." Lincoln shook his head. "You don't want to send that letter," he said. "Put it in the stove. That's what I do when I have written a letter while I am angry. It's a good letter and you had a good time writing it and feel better. Now burn it, and write another."

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Anger is never without a reason, but seldom with a good one. - Benjamin Franklin

Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame. - B. Franklin

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**R Kent Hughes** - Do we have the frown or smile of the Holy Spirit upon us? To gain his smile, I would like to suggest a spiritual exercise which can be done alone, but may be enhanced in tandem. If you are married, ask your spouse to participate. If you are single, invite a Christian friend to go through this exercise with you. Take each of the four categories in succession — truth (Eph 4:25), anger (Eph 4:26, 27), theft (Eph 4:28), and speech (Eph 4:29) — and reflect out loud to your partner as to whether this area of your life has the smile or frown of the Holy Spirit. If you fall short, confess your sins to God and each other, and invite your partner to pray for you. Be assured that the Holy Spirit will attend your conversation with great joy. (See [Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ](#))

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An author for Reader's Digest writes how he studied the Amish people in preparation for an article on them. In his observation at the school yard, he noted that the children never screamed or yelled. This amazed him. He spoke to the schoolmaster. He remarked how he had not once heard an Amish child yell, and asked why the schoolmaster thought that was so. The schoolmaster replied, "Well, have you ever heard an Amish adult yell?" - Reader's Digest.

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Bruce Goodrich was being initiated into the cadet corps at Texas A & M University. One night, Bruce was forced to run until he dropped -- but he never got up. Bruce Goodrich died before he even entered college.

A short time after the tragedy, Bruce's father wrote this letter to the administration, faculty, student body, and the corps of cadets: "I would like to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my family for the great outpouring of concern and sympathy from Texas A & M University and the college community over the loss of our son Bruce. We were deeply touched by the tribute paid to him in the battalion. We were particularly pleased to note that his Christian witness did not go unnoticed during his brief time on campus."

Mr. Goodrich went on: "I hope it will be some comfort to know that we harbor no ill will in the matter. We know our God makes no mistakes. Bruce had an appointment with his Lord and is now secure in his celestial home. When the question is asked, 'Why did this happen?' perhaps one answer will be, 'So that many will consider where they will spend eternity.'" Our Daily Bread, March 22, 1994

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[Steven Cole](#) - A "Peanuts" cartoon shows Linus venting his hostility by throwing rocks into a vacant lot. As he hurls each rock, he shouts, "This is for all the nasty thing they said about George Washington! This is for people who hate little kids! And this is for people who kick dogs! This is for hot summer nights! And this is for cold winter mornings! And this is for lies and broken promises!" Then he turns and asks Charlie Brown, "Do you have any requests?" If only it were that easy to tame your temper! But even Linus comes to realize, a couple of cartoons later, that throwing rocks is no solution for his anger. Neither is pounding a pillow as you think of the person you hate or letting out a primal scream.

Uncontrolled anger is a huge problem in our society. We frequently read about road rage, sometimes to the extreme where one angry motorist shoots and kills another motorist over some minor frustration. A Reader's Digest article (Oct., 2007) gave numerous examples of parents who watch their children's sports activities and erupt in anger to the point of attacking other parents and even the children competing against their children! One father beat another father to death after a youth hockey practice! Another dad clubbed his daughter's high school softball coach repeatedly in the head and body with an aluminum bat because the coach had suspended the girl for missing a game to attend the prom. The article stated that three-fourths of parents who have attended a youth sporting event have witnessed other parents being verbally abusive. One in seven have witnessed an actual physical altercation involving a parent!

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**Clamor** (2906) (**krauge** from **krazo** = clamor or cry = a word like "croak" ~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens = croak or cry out with a loud, raucous voice like donkey in Job 6:5, childbirth Is 26:17, war cry in Josh 6:16) can refer to a chorus of voices (one voice in Lk 1:42) speaking loudly at the same time (outcry, scream, shout, clamor). It is like a loud shouting match between two people (we've all seen those haven't we?) reflecting anger out of control! A third meaning the loud sound accompanying weeping, crying or wailing. (cp Heb 5:7 = What a picture **krauge** presents of the pathos and agony the Creator incarnate had to endure on His way to the Cross! Also used this way in Rev 21:4+ but here of sinners who were traumatized to see their evil world system passing away!)

In the present context **krauge** obviously refers to the shout or outcry of strife and reflects a public outburst that reveals loss of control (think of an out of control crowd rioting in the street in protest, etc). It is a loud and confused noise, especially of shouting.

[Sam Gordon](#) - It happens when we lose control of ourselves in public. It describes people who get excited and so wound up that they raise their voices in an argument and start shouting, even screaming, at each other.

[Steven Cole](#) - **Clamor** refers to loud, angry words, where people are screaming at each other. It includes cursing and calling someone abusive names. The only time you should yell at your mate or your children is to warn them of immediate danger. Sometimes you have to yell to be heard over the noise. But once things quiet down, you should *talk*, not yell.

**Webster** says **clamor** is "noisy shouting" and describes those who "become loudly insistent" making a vehement protest or demand. Clamor and slander are the outward manifestations of the foregoing vices.

**Barclay** in comments on Jesus in Hebrews 5:7 - The word he uses for **cry** (**krauge**) is very significant. It is a cry which a man does not choose to utter but is wrung from him in the stress of some tremendous tension or searing pain. So, then, the writer to the Hebrews says that there is no agony of the human spirit through which Jesus has not come. The rabbis had a saying: "There are three kinds of prayers, each loftier than the preceding-prayer, crying and tears. Prayer is made in silence; crying with raised voice; but tears overcome all things." Jesus knew even the desperate prayer of tears. ([The Daily Study Bible](#))

**Barclay** = A certain famous preacher tells how his wife used to advise him, "In the pulpit, keep your voice down." Whenever, in any discussion or argument, we become aware that our voice is raised, it is time to stop. The Jews spoke about what they called "the sin of insult," and maintained that God does not hold him guiltless who speaks insultingly to his brother man. Lear said of Cordelia: "Her voice was ever soft, Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman." It would save a great deal of heartbreak in this world if we simply learned to keep our voices down and if, when we had nothing good to say to a person, we did not say anything at all. The argument which has to be supported in a shout is no argument; and the dispute which has to be conducted in insults is not an argument but a brawl. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary](#))

**TDNT**...commenting on the word group - **krázo** [to cry], **anakrázō** [to cry out], **krauge** [outcry], **kraugázō** [to cry]...

In the Greek world the group has religious significance in connection with the demonic sphere (invoking the gods of the underworld) and magic (incantations). The Greeks and Romans mostly felt that such crying was unworthy of the gods.

The Greek OT (Septuagint) uses the word group (**krázo** [to cry], **anakrázō** [to cry out], **krauge** [outcry], **kraugázō** [to cry]) for crying to God in times of need. God graciously hears such crying (Ex. 22:22; Jdg. 3:9; Ps 22:5; 34:7, 17, etc.), but he will not hear the cries of the wicked (Mic. 3:4; Jer. 11:11). In the Psalms this crying takes on a special form which expresses a confident appeal for a hearing and an answer (Ps 27:7; 28:1). There is here no magical attempt to force God; the crying to God may be both

sorrowful (Ps 22:2) and joyful (Ps 55:17). A different usage occurs in Is. 6, where the seraphim cry "Holy, holy, holy" (Is 6:3). Different again is Is 42:2, where the Servant will not cry or lift up his voice. Jeremiah, however, is to cry to God, and he is granted a great vision of restoration (Je 33:3ff.). ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Erdmans](#))

**MacDonald** - Loud outcries of anger, bawling, angry bickering, shouting down of opponents.

**Robertson** - Old word for outcry

**Jamieson, Fausset and Brown** - clamour—compared by Chrysostom to a horse carrying anger for its rider: "Bridle the horse, and you dismount its rider."

**Poole** - such inordinate loudness as men in anger are wont to break out into in their words.

**Vincent** - "the outcry of passion, the outward manifestation of anger in vociferation or brawling." ([Ephesians 4 Word Studies](#))

**Lange** says that **clamor** "is wild, rough crying, refers to the voice, improperly strained and sharpened, as in scolding, upbraiding, to the casting about of words uninterrupted. It is the steed of anger (Chrysostom)."

**Krauge** - 6x in 6v - NAS = clamor(1), crying(2), shout(1), uproar(1), voice(1).

Matthew 25:6 "But at midnight there was a **shout**, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

Luke 1:42 And she cried out with a loud **voice** and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

Acts 23:9+ (PEOPLE SHOUTING BACK AND FORTH) And there occurred a great **uproar**; and some of the scribes of the Pharisaic party stood up and began to argue heatedly, saying, "We find nothing wrong with this man; suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and **clamor** and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Hebrews 5:7+ In the days of His flesh (= incarnation of Christ, not that He ever acted "fleshly" in the bad ethical sense!), He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud **crying** and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

Revelation 21:4+ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or **crying**, or pain; the first things have passed away."

**Krauge** - 51x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint** -

Gen 18:20f; 19:13; Exod 3:7, 9; 11:6; 12:30; 1 Sam 4:6; 5:12; 2 Sam 6:15; 22:7; 1 Kgs 12:24; Neh 5:1, 6; 9:9; Esth 4:3; Job 16:18; 34:28; 39:25; Ps 5:1; 9:12; 18:6; 102:1; 144:14; Eccl 9:17; Isa 5:7; 30:19; 58:4; 65:19; 66:6; Jer 4:19; 8:19; 14:2; 18:22; 20:16; 25:36; 31:35; 46:12; 48:5, 34; 49:21; 50:46; 51:54; Ezek 21:22; 27:28; Amos 1:14; 2:2; Jonah 1:2; 2:2; Zeph 1:10, 16

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, "The **outcry** (LXX = krauge) of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.

Exodus 3:7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their **cry** (LXX= krauge) because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

Psalms 144:14 Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no **outcry** (LXX = krauge) in our streets!

**Slander** (988) (**blasphemia** from **blapto** = hinder, injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemí** = to speak; see study of verb form **blasphemeo**) refers to verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander. It is speech which seeks to wound someone's reputation by evil reports, evil speaking. Abusive speech against someone by telling lies or otherwise offending them. In Classical Greek **blasphemia/blasphemeo** represented the strongest expression of personal defamation. The idea is that the words spoken to hurt, destroy, discredit or smite another person's reputation or good name by speaking evil against them. Today we might call this "[smear tactics](#)" (an everyday practice in American politics!)

**Blasphemia** means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute and so to slander, **todefame** (to harm the reputation of by libel or slander), speak evil of, to **rail at** (revile or scold in harsh, insolent, or abusive language and rail stresses an unrestrained berating), to speak **calumny** (noun form = a misrepresentation intended to blacken another's reputation = the act of uttering false charges or misrepresentations maliciously calculated to damage another's reputation), to **calumniate** (verb form = to utter maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about - calumniate imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to

the assertions)

**Blasphemia** is speech that is harmful, which denigrates or defames and thus refers to reviling, denigration, disrespect, slander, abusive speech (as against a person's reputation), evil speaking. In the Revelation blasphemia refers to that evil speech directed against the nature and power of God and especially characterizes the speech of the **Antichrist** (Rev 13:1, 5, 6+)

**Blasphemy** is an injury offered to God, by denying that which is due and belonging to him, on attributing to him that which is not agreeable to his nature. -- **Linwood**.

It is worth noting that in the OT blasphemy was a most serious sin, so serious in fact, that the Law of Moses decreed that anyone who blasphemed the name of Jehovah God should be stoned (Lv 24:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). This law even included foreigners who were guests in the camp of Israel.

**Sam Gordon** - It is when we spread malicious rumours and juicy stories about people. It is when we pour petrol on a fire and then walk away holding the fire extinguisher. It is the kind of thing we tend to do behind people's backs because we want to destroy their reputation

**Barclay** - When this is used of words against man, it means **slander**; when it is used of words against God, it means **blasphemy**. It means insulting man or God. ([Ephesians 4 Commentary](#))

**J. Vernon McGee** explains "we are not to repeat gossip. It has been said that you can't believe everything you hear today, but you can repeat it! ... Many evil reports are passed from person to person without even a shred of evidence that the report is true. Another old saying is that some people will believe anything if it is whispered to them! ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Life Application Bible** has an interesting note on this **gossip**, referring to it as "passive slander -- "We don't often call it by its right name, but gossip is **passive slander**, and it is a massive problem in churches today. It may be even worse than slander due to its dishonesty. A slanderer actively wants to attack and hurt someone, so that person is easily identified. Gossipers don't care whether or not a person is hurt as they pass along dishonest and harmful information. Churches can save a lot of headaches and heartaches by not allowing gossip (or gossipers) to gain a foothold." ([Barton, B, et al: The NIV Life Application Commentary Series: Tyndale](#))

**Matthew Henry** comments that we are "to speak evil of none, unjustly and falsely, or unnecessarily, without call, and when it may do hurt but no good to the person himself or any other. **If no good can be spoken, rather than speak evil unnecessarily, say nothing.** We must **never take pleasure in speaking ill of others, nor make the worst of any thing, but the best we can** We must not go up and down as tale-bearers, carrying ill-natured stories, to the prejudice of our neighbour's good name and the destruction of brotherly love. Misrepresentations, or insinuations of bad intentions, or of hypocrisy in what is done, things out of our reach or cognizance, these come within the reach of this prohibition. As this evil is too common, so it is of great malignity." (Bolding added) (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible)

The related verb **blasphemeo** refers to a "malicious misrepresentation". Note that in several of the New Testament uses of **blasphemeo**, we see that the actions of professed Christians can speak louder than their words and thus convey "malicious misrepresentation" of God and/or the Gospel to those who observe those actions. In such situations God and His Gospel have in effect been blasphemed. Thus Christians for their part must take care that they do not, by their own conduct, give cause for blasphemy against God or against his word.

**Wiersbe - Blasphemy** involves much more than taking God's name in vain, though that is at the heart of it. A person **blasphemes** God when he takes His Word lightly and even jests about it or when he deliberately defies God to judge Him. (Bolding added) ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**MacArthur** - To slander people, however, is to blaspheme God, inasmuch as He created men and women (cf. James 3:9)...People are to be treated with dignity because they are made in the image of God. The believer's speech must not be marred by insults or disparaging remarks directed at others. James laments that "from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:10). ([MacArthur, J. Colossians. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Blasphemia in context is) the ongoing defamation of someone that rises from a bitter heart. ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Webster 1828** - An indignity offered to God by words or writing; reproachful, contemptuous or irreverent words uttered impiously against Jehovah...In the middle ages, blasphemy was used to denote simply the blaming or condemning of a person or thing. Among the Greeks, to blaspheme was to use words of ill omen, which they were careful to avoid.

**Blasphemia** in the present context is related to **wrath** and **anger** but is a more enduring manifestation of inward anger, that shows itself in reviling. It refers to an attempt to belittle and cause someone to fall into disrepute or receive a bad reputation. **Blasphemia** is the ongoing defamation of someone that rises from a bitter heart.

**Poole** - And evil speaking - either with respect to God or man, though the latter seems particularly meant here; railing, reviling, reproaching, &c., the ordinary effects of immoderate anger.

**Vincent** - The word does not necessarily imply blasphemy against God. It is used of reviling, calumny, evil-speaking in general. ([Ephesians 4 Word Studies](#))

**Blasphemia** - 18x in 17v - Mt 12:31; 15:19; 26:65; Mk 3:28; 7:22; 14:64; Lk 5:21; Jn 10:33; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8-note; 1Ti 6:4; Jude 1:9; Rev 2:9+; Rev 13:1+, Rev 13:5+, Rev 13:6+; Rev 17:3+. **NAS** = abusive language(1), blasphemies(4), blasphemous(2), blasphemy(6), railing(1), slander(3), slanders(1). In the non-apocryphal Septuagint only in Ezekiel 35:12

Matthew 15:19+ (cp Mk 7:21, 22+) For out of the heart (the unregenerate, God hating, "black" heart is the source) come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, **slanders**.

Mark 14:64+ "You have heard the **blasphemy** (false accusation against Jesus, cp Lk 5:21, Jn 10:33 = they were going to stone Him!); how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.

Col 3:8+ But now you also, **put** (aorist imperative) them all aside (because you have been raised up with Christ, because Christ is your life, because you are looking for His appearance - see Col 3:1, 2, 3,4): anger, wrath, malice, **slander** (blasphemia), and abusive speech (aischrologia = foul-mouthed from aischros = filthy or improper + lego = say) from your mouth.

**Lawrence Richards** - In the NT, blasphemy indicates a hostile attitude toward God that is expressed directly or indirectly in contemptuous or slanderous ways. The verb is found some thirty-five times of the fifty-nine occurrences of the word group. What we call swearing may be categorized as blasphemy in that it treats God's name contemptuously or lightly. But the hostility implied in the NT use of the word shows us that, biblically, blasphemy is far more than a casual curse. It is striking that one cause of the contempt in which unbelievers may hold the Lord is the actions of those who claim to believe. The Gentiles blasphemed God's name because of the hypocrisy they saw in the Jews (Ro 2:24-note). How important it is, then, that our lives honor the Lord so that we elicit praise, rather than contempt, for him. ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

The point of Richard's note is that not only one's speech but one's behavior (including believers) can be blasphemous! It is tragic that many Christians **speak contemptuously** of politicians and other public figures, not realizing that in doing so they hinder the work of redemption. David's prayer is apropos when we are tempted to speak inappropriately and in a malicious, demeaning way of others

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth. Keep watch over the door of my lips. [Ps 141:3](#)) ([See Spurgeon's comment](#))

You are writing a Gospel,  
A chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do  
And the words that you say.

Men read what you write,  
Whether faithful or true:  
Just what is the Gospel  
According to you?  
--- Author unknown

**Put away** ([142](#)) ([airo](#)) means to lift up something, such as an anchor of a ship to that the ship could set sail (see Acts 27:13). What a great picture of saints as God's "ships" sailing through their life in the waters of time, and able to move out with power because they have lifted up the anchors of those sins in Ephesians 4:31! It is used figuratively here to picture taking up and carrying away (removing) these evil works just mentioned along with malice. It means to make a clean sweep of these vices! Imagine these vices as the worn out, filthy, dirty coat our old unregenerate self once wore continually, for it was the only "coat" we owned, having inherited it from our forefather Adam (Ro 5:12-note, 1Cor 15:22). Now, that the old self has been crucified with Christ and made effectively inoperative (it can still spring into action if "fed" or stimulated!), let us put off the old "coat" (put away) and put on the new garment of Christ-likeness, that the world might see Him in our words and works (His life lived out through us, a new life, a supernatural life, an aroma of life to some who see, and an aroma of death to others who see and reject Christ's offer of eternal life).

In Eph 4:31 Paul uses the **aorist imperative** a command to be carried out [posthaste](#), even with a sense of

urgency - "Do it now! Don't delay!" As discussed in more detail below the [passive voice](#) means to let it **BE** put away - I get the idea that we have to yield to the Holy Spirit, so that He can exert the influence or effect on our hearts which allows us to carry out this command. And if you doubt that this is the sense, just try to put away one of these negative traits in your own natural power in the "heat of the moment!"

**THOUGHT** - Note that **put away** is [passive voice](#). You say "So what?" Well, the [passive voice](#) usually signifies that the subject is acted upon by an outside force. In the case of this small "vice list" while we are called to **put away** all of the items, the [passive voice](#) would support the premise that we cannot put them away by relying solely on our own strength but must rely on strength from outside ourselves, specifically the supernatural strength provided by the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that believers "get a pass" (so to speak) and can glibly say "[Let go and let God](#)." No, we must still make the volitional choice when each of these ugly "snakes" raises its ugly head and must pick up the hatchet and cut off its head (so to speak)! More accurately we could view this as "**Let God and let's go!**" We are 100% responsible to put away these vices, and yet at the same time are 100% dependent on the Spirit (giving us the desire or "want to" and the power to kill this sin - see Php 2:13NLT+). Is this mysterious? Is it even "bad mathematics" (100%/100%)? Yes, but (1) it is Biblically accurate and (2) it is wholly mysterious! So then "**JUST DO IT!**" (which is the sense of the aorist imperative) Kill these sins lest they be killing you! Kill them enabled by the Spirit - memorize, meditate and practice Romans 8:13+ - "for if you are living (present tense, active voice = habitually making the choice of will to live) according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body (**ED: THE ROTTING GARMENT OF THE FALLEN FLESH**), you will live."

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones** - I must remind you that the Apostle is exhorting the Ephesians to **put away** all this evil. He does not say that because they have become Christian it has automatically dropped off. So any kind of evangelistic preaching that gives the impression that the moment you become a Christian all your problems are left behind is just not true, and the Apostle realised that the Ephesians were still subject to this kind of thing. And again we notice that he does not merely tell them to pray that these sins may be taken out of their lives. Pray by all means, but do not forget that Paul tells the Ephesians to put them off, to put them far from them, and we must do the same. It is not pleasant. It is not at all pleasant even to preach on these things; it is very unpleasant for us to face them, and to see if there is within our hearts any bitterness of spirit, or any malice or hatred or wrath or anger; but, says the Apostle, we must do it, and if we find any vestige or trace of these things within us, we must take hold of it and hurl it away from us, trample upon it, and bolt the door upon it, and never allow it to come back. We must do just that! Let it, he says, be put away from you! Put it away once and for ever, and realise that it is a denial, a complete denial of everything that you claim to be and to have as newborn people in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the Holy Spirit of God has come to take up His blessed residence. If these things are in us the Holy Spirit is grieved, for the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. All that is contrary to this fruit must be put away, says Paul. But, thank God, he does not leave it at that! He goes on to his positive injunction. Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. Thank God, I say, that the Apostle does not stop at the negative (put off's) but brings us on to the positive (put on). **Indeed, as I have already said, you cannot truly deal with the negative unless you are at the same time doing the positive.** (AMEN TO THAT - NOTICE THE ORDER - Col 3:1-4+ MUST BE "PUT ON" BEFORE YOU CAN EFFECTIVELY KILL SIN in Col 3:5+. IN Gal 5:16+ YOU ARE TO FIRST WALK BY THE SPIRIT AND THEN AND ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE ENABLED TO NOT CARRY OUT THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH! OUR FALLEN FLESH TRIES TO INVERT THE ORDER AND THE RESULT IS INVARIABLY FAILURE TO KILL SIN! IN Ro 8:13+ IT IS BY THE SPIRIT YOU PUT TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE BODY!) **The way to get rid of the defects is to cultivate the virtues.** To use a well-known phrase of Thomas Chalmers, what we need is to apply the "[The Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)". I use a [simple illustration](#). The way the dead leaves of winter are removed from some trees is not that people go around plucking them off; no, it is the new life, the shoot that comes and pushes off the dead in order to make room for itself. In the same way the Christian gets rid of all such things as bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking and all malice. The new qualities develop and the others simply have no room; they are pushed out and they are pushed off. ([From his sermon Forgiven and Forgiving](#))

#### ALONG WITH ALL MALICE: sun pase kakia:

- **Along with all malice** Ge 4:8; 27:41; 37:4,21; Lv 19:17,18; 2Sa 13:22; Pr 10:12; 26:24,25; Eccl 7:9; Ro 1:29; 1Co 5:8; 14:20; Col 3:8; Titus 3:3; 1Jn 3:12,15
- [Ephesians 4 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 4:17-32 Solving Conflicts](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 4:28-32](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 4:28-29: A Brand New Way of Life - 4](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 4:25-32 Principles of New Life](#) - John MacArthur



- [Ephesians 4:17-5:14 Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur

## THE EVIL "ICING" ON THE "VICE CAKE"

**Along with** ([sun/syn](#)) **all malice** ([kakia](#)) - As the good doctor **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** said "And then, as if all this were not enough, the Apostle adds the word **malice**. **Malice** means wicked desires with respect to others, a determination to harm others, again a kind of settled spirit which so hates others that it thinks of ways of harming them, plots such ways, gloats over them, and then proceeds to put them into practice; it is a kind of malignity. Evil, malicious gossip and slander also form a part of this **malice** that he tells us all to put far from us." ([From his sermon Forgiven and Forgiving](#))

**Harry A Ironside** emphasizes "**all**" of "**all malice**" - "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all—**a-l-l**—malice." Now, you see, if you do not live up to that, you are not living a real Christian life. This is Christianity in the power of the Holy Ghost. And we are not merely told to put these things away, there must be the positive side....I wish that as Christians we would be obedient to this word of God! Is there any **bitterness** in your heart against anyone on earth? Do you say, "but you don't know how I have been tested, how I have been tried, insulted, offended?" If you had not been offended there would be no reason for the bitterness at all, but Paul said, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." If you do not live up to that, you are not living a real Christian life. **This is Christianity lived in the power of the Holy Ghost.** ([Ephesians 4 - Ironside's Notes](#))

**Skevington** - The poisonous source of all these regrettable re-assertions of the "old self" (Ep 4:22+) is named as "**malice**" ([kakia](#) "bad feeling"). ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Even the non-theological definitions of **malice** in our English dictionaries paint a horrid picture of this evil vice = feeling a need to see others suffer; the quality of threatening evil; desire to cause pain, injury, suffering or distress to another! Not a pretty picture of our fallen, sinful flesh! And lest you might be saying "I never commit that sin," be aware (and wary) that this sinister "snake" lurks in your mortal body, ever ready to raise its ugly head to strike and sink its "fangs" into your victim!

[Etymology Online](#) has this telling derivation for the English word **malice** - "desire to hurt another, propensity to inflict injury or suffering, active ill-will," from Old French *malice* "ill will, spite, sinfulness, wickedness" (12c.), from Latin *malitia* "badness, ill will, spite," from *malus* "bad, unpleasant" (see [mal-](#)). In legal use, "a design or intention of doing mischief to another without justification or excuse" (1540s).

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**With** ([sun/syn](#)) is a conjunction signifying a closer, more intimate relationship than the other Greek word for "with" (*meta*), and here indicates the intimate association of all previous 5 vices into one evil bundle **with malice**.

**All** ([3956](#)) (**pas**) means **all** without exception, every form of. We are called to be holy and holy is practically related to wholly, necessitating that we put all malice wholly away that we might be holy as He is holy!

**Malice** ([2549](#)) (**kakia**) is the general term for evil that is the root of all vices. In general terms it speaks of ill will, wishing and probably plotting evil against people. *Kakia* is synonymous with the quality of wickedness and thus in a moral sense means depravity, vice or baseness. It is the opposite of **arete** (note) and all virtue and therefore lacks social value. In reference to behavior **kakia** conveys the idea of a mean-spirited or vicious attitude or disposition as indicated by words such as malice, ill-will, hatefulness, and dislike. It is an attitude of wickedness as an evil habit of one's mind. *Kakia* is used in NT to describe the wickedness which comes from within a person. **Malice** desires to hurt another and rejoices in it! One Greek scholar terms **malice** "the vicious character generally."

**Trench** says that **kakia** is "that peculiar form of evil which manifests itself in a malignant interpretation of the actions of others, an attributing of them all to the worst motive"

**Webster** says that "**malice**" is a desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another and implies a deep-seated often unexplainable desire to see another suffer.

**Malice** is not only a moral deficiency but destroys fellowship which is significant for Ephesians 4 begins with a call to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That cannot be accomplished when malice is loose in a congregation! To varying degrees, the unsaved spend their life maliciously.

In Romans Paul describes those who have refused to acknowledge God and are given over by God to **adepaved mind** as "being filled (REMEMBER WHAT "FILLS" YOU CONTROLS YOU!) with all unrighteousness, **wickedness**, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips." (Ro 1:29+).

**Kakia** - 11x in 11v - evil(3), malice(5), trouble(1), wickedness(2). Mt. 6:34 = trouble; Acts 8:22; Ro. 1:29; 1 Co. 5:8; 1 Co. 14:20; Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Titus 3:3; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1; 1 Pet. 2:16 - Note that malice must be put away in order to receive the Holy Word (Jas 1:21) and hunger from the Holy Word (1 Pet. 2:1). It follows that if you are not hungering for the Holy Word, there is likely to be some unholy thought, word or deed that needs to be thrown off (confessed and repented).

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Wayne Barber writes that...

In Ephesians 4:31-32 Paul contrasts the two garments. We are in a flow now that continues through the rest of the book. How we are to walk worthy (Eph 4:1)? How we are to live this new life (cf Ep 4:24)? He gives us a contrast. One is like a (spiritual) [cesspool](#), the other like a wellspring (of living water). One I would rather not speak about, the other one is an [artesian well](#) (See [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)). It is something that never depletes its supply and provision to others (cf Jn 7:38+ - "FROM YOUR INNERMOST BEING WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER!").

Paul shows us the cesspool of the old self and the wellspring of the new self, the new garment. He lets us see what is underneath everything that is going on in our life. We can either tap into the cesspool, the old stagnant, rotten, putrid type of thing, or we can tap into the wellspring of Jesus Christ. Which garment are you going to put on?

Let's look in Ephesians 4:31 at the cesspool of the old garment.

"Let all (HOW MUCH?) **bitterness** and **wrath** and **anger** and **clamor** and **slander** be put away from you [put off like taking off a garment], along with all **malice**."

Now Paul does something that really throws me. Normally when Peter or Paul make a list, the first thing they mention is the most important thing. It tends to be the subject, whereas the rest of it seems to modify that subject. In Galatians 5:22 he says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love." Then all the things that follow are just manifestations of that love. In 2 Timothy 3, Paul says in the last days men will be lovers of self and then he gives 19 different characteristics of a lover of self.

However, here in Ephesians 4:31 he reverses it. Let me show you what I mean. The last word, [malice](#) is the catch-all word. **Malice** is the "house" that all these words live in. I think it would be best to start there. He does the same thing in Eph 4:32 putting the source at the end, and he puts the symptoms in the front.

Let me show you what **malice** means.

Look at 1 Corinthians 5:7-8+ where we find "[malice](#)," which is the essence of our **fallen flesh**. The Greek word is [kakia](#) the word for inherent unrighteousness. It is a viciousness that comes along with the old garment. All these are relationship words. **The signal that we are spiritual and have on the new garment is going to be in our relationships.** Over and over and over we see this.

Well, here we go again. In 1 Corinthians 5:7+ Paul exhorts, "**Clean out** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the old **leaven**."

Do you know what [leaven](#) is? It is yeast. I don't know much about cooking, but I do know that when you put yeast into things, it causes it to rise up. Yeast causes something to happen. You see, the moment I put on the old garment, immediately a viciousness begins to set in. Immediately I am out to get you. Immediately I am going to manipulate you. Immediately something I am going to do, say, or whatever is going to divide me and you because I am not interested in you anymore. I am interested in me. That is the old garment. That is *kakia*. That is inherent unrighteousness. It comes along with the old garment. It is in that cesspool when we put that thing on and we won't bow before the Lord Jesus.

So Paul writes...

**"Clean out** the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

That gives you an idea of what the *kakia* is. It is the sinful attitude that stirs something up in your life.

Look in Acts 8:22+. Here is a man who wanted to purchase the Spirit of God. His name was Simon. Simon Peter really lays this guy out. Let's begin with verse 20.

"But Peter said to him, 'May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.'"

Now watch out! Peter says, "Your **heart** is not right before God." It is **an attitude you have towards God**.

You put on the old garment and say, "God, I don't want You ruling my life." Can a Christian do that? You better believe they can! We make choices all day long whether or not to let Him rule us versus whether or not we are going to take over rule ourselves.

Luke goes on to record Peter's words...

"Therefore repent of this **wickedness** [[kakia](#)] of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the **intention of your heart** may be forgiven you."

There it is. The intention of your heart is not right.

So we are seeing this old garment is an attitude and it is going to affect the lifestyle. The attitude is rooted into that old cesspool. What is going to come out of it is nothing that is good. It is going to do nothing but tear relationships down. It does nothing to build relationships up.

Look in Acts 14:1-2+, and I will show you one more place where a form of the word is used, not the word itself but a form of it. It says,

"And it came about that in Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles, and **embittered** (kakoo = verb form related to kakia) them against the brethren."

The word "**embittered**" is a form of that word [kakia](#).

You see, when you put on that old garment, you want others to agree with you. You are going to find somebody else who is negative. You are going to find somebody else who doesn't want to think about others but wants to think of themselves. What do you do? You begin to embitter others towards the brethren. In other words, you are no longer preserving the unity of the Spirit. What you are doing is dividing by your very attitude, which comes right out of the old cesspool of self.

## BITTERNESS

First of all, out of that *kakia*, out of that old garment, out of that malice, is a word called "bitterness."

Now we know that **bitterness is when you have been injured by somebody**. You are not bitter unless you have been affected wrongly by somebody. The word for "bitterness" is the word *pikria*. It refers to something that is acidic, **that will literally eat you alive**.

You know that **the problem with many of us as Christians is not what we are eating, but it's what is eating us!** That is what bitterness does. Somebody has offended you. It always starts with being personally injured or personally hurt. You know, if it weren't for people, we could live the Christian life!

But because there are people, we are going to be offended. You are going to be offended by me if I am not wearing the right garment. If it is not the right one, it is going to say what it shouldn't have said. It is going to act in a way that it shouldn't have acted. It is going to offend you. We are the church and we have got to remember that every one of us will show those moments when we chose not to wear the new garment. **And that is also why we need to be forgiving to each other**. Now, if you didn't have any sin in your life, throw the first stone.

**Bitterness** is something that comes from a personal injury. Somebody has hurt you. You have heard what somebody said about you and it dug deep into your life. You didn't put on the garment of Christ, which would be strengthening you in the inner man with something that you didn't have before, **forgiveness and unconditional love**. You have put on that old garment which is rooted into the cesspool of old **self** and what comes out is **bitterness**.

Let me show you just one Scripture, Hebrews 12:15. I have constantly warned all of us what will happen if we give the devil an opportunity. I don't mean he gets inside of us, but he gets inside the body of Christ by using people, not the body physically but the body spiritually, the church. He uses people inside. You see, there used to be a day when people would come to church, go out and be persecuted. The devil would fight them outside the walls. Now he is going to church, folks. When we give him an opportunity, look out. Look at what it will do.

"See to it that no one comes short of the **grace of God**; that no root of **bitterness** springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled"

What is the **grace of God**? It is the transforming power of God in your life and in my life. When I put on the new garment, that is His grace working within me, transforming me. Now, I am different than I used to be.

**Bitterness** is usually a reaction that you have to some injury that somebody else caused you, but it is a wrong reaction. You put on the wrong garment. You dipped into the wrong place. You went back to the "cesspool of self" instead of coming to the "wellspring of Jesus Christ".

### WRATH

Let's look at the word "**wrath**." There are several words here for "anger" and "wrath." We are going to see "**anger**" in the next section. I need to explain them to you. As a matter of fact, let's put them together right now.

"**Wrath**" (in this verse) is the Greek word *thumos*. It is when you explode. Have you ever done that?

I can remember when I was in church recreation. I lost a basketball game one night because of a stupid referee. I mean a stupid, brain dead referee. We lost a championship in overtime. Stupid referee. I remember how mad I got. I was the Minister of Activities, and I took the basketball and threw it against the end wall so hard that it went all the way to the other end of the court. Take a basketball and see how hard it is to throw it to make it go that far. Everybody walked out of the building kind of like, "Whew!" I went into the fireside room of that activities building, slammed the door and sat down. I was ready to take on half the city because of stupid referees. Everybody left. My assistant turned the light off on me and left me sitting there in the darkness. That is wrath, *thumos*. I wasn't just mad. I exploded! That is what *thumos* is.

As a matter of fact, did you know that the seven bowls of God's judgment called the bowls of wrath are called *thumos*? Folks, we haven't seen anything until those seven last bowls of judgment fall on this earth. Then those who are here will realize the anger of a holy God towards sin. Without mercy He is going to pour out those bowls of wrath on this earth.

### ANGER

But there is another word. He goes on and says "**anger**" which is **orge** which means you are angry, but you may not necessarily have shown it yet. Oh, you are capable of blowing up, but you haven't blown up yet. You see, this is why we get so judgmental. Some people carry it and hold it pretty well for a long period of time. So we think they are really godly. Are you kidding me? Look at the other things in their life. You see, anger can be disguised. It can be covered over. *Thumos*, is bursting out, the outburst. *Orge*, is the actual anger itself.

### CLAMOR

Then he gives the word "**clamor**." This is when you get loud. This is the word for loud. It says there was an uproar over in Acts. In Hebrews it says He cried out before the Father. The word is a loud, loud cry. This is when you are getting a little noisy with the way you feel in that cesspool.

### SLANDER

Then he uses the word "**slander**." Now that is not the same word Peter uses in I Peter 2:1. There it means to speak against. Here in Ephesians the word is *blasphemia*. It means abusive language. When you start cursing somebody on the highway, you've have just nailed it. You've got on the wrong garment. Watch out. You see, all these are tied intricately together. Either way you go it is the same thing. You are injured somehow inside and now that acid has built up inside you. You are ready to just absolutely stamp out anybody that gets in your path. That comes from that cesspool of self. Think about that. The Holy Spirit will prick your heart and say,

"I want you to make this choice."

You say,

"No, I won't do it."

Do you realize what you have just done? You have just put that old sick cesspool garment on (you've grieved, quenched, resisted the Spirit). Everything that comes out of it is going to defile any relationship you have all day. That is why you have to continuously say,

"Oh, God. I've put the wrong one on. I confess it. I am repenting."

What do I mean by **repenting**? You turn around and put the right one on. Listen, folks, we have to see that there is a performance or a perfection level.

**Spirituality is not an arrival.**

**It is a pursuit.**

So often we misunderstand relationships. We think because we are putting on the right garment, everybody else ought to be judged by us. Friend, as soon as you think that way, you have just put the wrong garment back on! Who in the world are we to point a finger at anybody? Does being spiritual mean that you have a quiet time every morning at 5:00? Is that spirituality? Are you spiritual because you passed out tracts last year? Are you spiritual because you have witnessed to everything that has moved on the downtown streets? Does that mean that you are spiritual? I doubt it. Every one of us are guilty of putting that wrong garment on. That is why when we see a brother who has the wrong one on, it ought to lead us to bleed for him because we know what he has just done. We have done it ourselves (Ephesians 4:31-32: A Brand New Way of Life - 5)