

Did Bible Scholars Get This Wrong?

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Having studied the Bible for more than Fifty Years, I have come across many passages that have spoken to me on a personal level that may deviate from what are the “Accepted Interpretations,” taking into account the circumstances and the context of the particular passage in question. Although I favor “Literal Interpretation,” this does not mean I limit God as to how He speaks to us as individuals in various situations. As one who digs more deeply into the Bible than many, I consult many commentators and scholastic works during that process. Additionally, I have had many excellent mentors over the years including Pastors and Lay Ministers including both men and women with deep spiritual roots and years of sound doctrinal training. Nevertheless, there are some passages in the Bible that trouble me as to the generally accepted interpretations even to this day. Most of problems concerning interpretation are rooted in the particular beliefs of particular religious groups. However, there are some passages that transcend religious beliefs that are generally accepted by most, if not all Christian based religions or denominations as being the proper interpretation. The following passage is perhaps one of the most quoted passages in the New Testament! It is especially dear to me, as it is the only bible passage my father ever quoted to me; he had learned it from an Army Air Corps. Chaplin while he was in flight training during WW2.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ *"Be angry, and do not sin":* do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.

These verses, often quoted during pre-marital or marital counseling sessions, are presented as a path to having a better future relationship with one's spouse, although it is also applied to general relationships as well. After all, continued anger and holding grudges, rarely has positive results; additionally, the bible teaches that upon us accepting Jesus (our ultimate mentor), God says, “He remembers our sin no more,” therefore, who are we to hold a grudge! Most people are taught that this passage is saying that it is not necessarily sinful to get angry at someone, but it is sinful to prolong that anger, therefore they say

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that this passage teaches us to get over your anger quickly... before the sun goes down! I will have been married for 52 years as of July 2024, and I can say with confidence, that this is usually not as easy as it sounds. Although my relationship with my wife has grown into something I cherish and would not trade for anything, we have had “Our Moments” so to speak, having had had arguments resulting in anger that at times lasted for days – even weeks!

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians has been one of my favorite books, ever since I first gave my life to Jesus. Paul’s words not only give us comfort and assurance, they also contain practical wisdom for living a holy life. Although Paul does not “sugar coat” what to expect in life, but he does assure us that God gives us all we need to make it through, despite attacks from Satan. Chapter 4 of Ephesians covers a lot of ground. Paul starts out talking about unity amongst Christians, pointing out that although we may have differences of opinions, we must remain committed to God and to living peaceably with one another as we all serve the one and only true God. He points out the various gifts God gives us, but more importantly, throughout the book, Paul stresses that if we are truly “Born Again,” there should be some obvious changes in our behavior *over time*, both in general, and including our behavior towards others. Throughout the entire book, he deals with the struggles we all face physically, and spiritually. It is in this context where this passage appears. So while the generally accepted interpretation of **Ephesians 4:26-27** does fit this context, it does however take on a very different meaning when some of the other Greek meanings of key words are explored.

While engaged in a deep study of this passage I came across another intriguing interpretation that makes even more sense, especially when considering the overall context of the book concerning Spiritual Warfare. I came across a translation of Ephesians 4 by Kenneth Samuel Wuest. Although his name is not familiar to most, he has impressive credentials. Wuest is credited as one of the translators of the original New American Standard Bible (NASB).^[5] He later went on to produce his own English translation of the New Testament,

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the [Wuest Expanded Translation](#) (WET), based on [Nestle's](#) critical text.^[6] In his translation of the New Testament, *Wuest attempts to make the original Greek more accessible to the [lay](#) reader by drawing out (in translation) the full variety of possible meanings and translations of the underlying Greek words.*^[6] From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (emphasis mine)

As I was personally exploring the Greek meanings of the words in verse 26, I picked up on some expanded meanings of the word translated anger or angry, the Greek word ὀργίζω pronounced or-gid-oz according to: James Strong, *Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary*, (Austin, TX: WORDsearch Corp., 2007). Digging deeper in the same source, one of the root words in the Greek is (oregomai); which means to properly *desire* (as a *reaching* forth or *excitement* of the mind), i.e. (by analogy) violent *passion* (*ire*, or [justifiable] *abhorrence*); by implication *punishment* :- anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath. Just prior to verse 26 Paul spends a lot of time related to the spiritual battles we will face in this life as we attempt to adjust our behavior to be more pleasing to God. He emphasizes the fact that Satan's attacks are - and will continue to be relentless. When I came across Kenneth Wuest's rendition of this passage, it made so much more sense to me in relation to the general context of the book! This is what prompted me to question the generally accepted interpretation of the passage from Ephesians 4:26-27. Read the Wuest translation:

Be constantly angry with a righteous indignation, and stop sinning. Do not allow the sun to go down upon your irritated, exasperated, embittered anger. And stop giving an occasion for acting [opportunity] to the devil. THE NEW TESTAMENT An Expanded Translation by KENNETH S. WUEST

Could it be that Paul was not talking about quickly getting over anger that we have towards others, but rather that we should *maintain* a “Righteous Indignation” towards Satan? Satan's constant attacks should irritate us to the point that we spitefully go against his temptations, going out of our way to, “Be Holy” as God commands us to be. We should become so embittered against

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Satan that we, “Do not allow the sun to go down upon your (*our*) ***irritated, exasperated, embittered anger!***” If we took this rendition of Ephesians 4: 26-27 to heart and maintained a righteous indignation against Satan, our Spiritual walk would probably take on a whole new dimension!

Satan has no power over a Christian. **He cannot do anything to us without our permission and cooperation.** Satan is out to Steal Kill and Destroy, both individuals and families... this should induce such an anger in us towards Satan that should never go away! While both interpretations of this passage are plausible, in my humble opinion, Kenneth Wuest is the one who got it right. When I apply his translation to my own Spiritual walk, it gives me more strength and confidence than I ever had before. Satan is a defeated foe and we should all treat him as such! We should **never** let the sun go down on our anger towards him for what he is attempting to do to us, and our loved ones!

Supporting Scriptures

Psalm 97:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

Romans 12:9 (KJV)

⁹ Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Proverbs 8:13 (KJV)

¹³ The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.