**Profanity**

**Introduction**

1. The Christian is one who has yielded and submitted to the control of Jesus in their actions, and their speech – **Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:17**
2. Our words must be congruous with our confession and conduct of faith.
3. We need to understand the power of our tongue, and the desperate need we have to monitor it in order to keep it from inflicting destruction, both on others and ourselves.
   1. **James 3:2-12** – the power of the tongue – boasts great things (i.e. is capable of great things) – gaining control of the tongue is evidence of spiritual maturity. **(James 1:26** – do not bridle your tongue your religion is useless.)
   2. We need to be careful about minimizing the gravity of our speech.
      1. Sticks and stones saying – not really true!
      2. Frowning on the monitoring and regulation of speech is understandable in some area’s (like freedom of speech, and religion), BUT CHRISTIANS KNOW THEY AREN’T FREE TO SAY WHAT THEY WANT.
      3. Words are just words? But they’re so much more!
4. Christian’s must not take part in the profane speech, or profanity, which characterizes the world.
5. What is profanity?
6. Defined
   1. Profane – unhallowed, common.
      1. “not concerned with religion or religious purposes” (Webster)
      2. “not holy because unconsecrated, impure, or defiled” (ibid.)
      3. Verb – “to treat (something sacred) with abuse, irreverence, or contempt” (ibid.)
   2. Profanity – “the quality or state of being profane.” (Webster)
      1. As it pertains to language – “profane language.” (ibid.)
      2. Language that is unholy, or common. Not befitting religious people and/or purposes.
   3. Profaning (verb) – Blasphemy – profaning God’s name
      1. **Leviticus 19:12** – not to profane God’s name.
      2. **Exodus 20:7** – take it in vain.
      3. **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – He is one. (Jehovah God is one) – NONE OTHER LIKE HIM.
      4. He is not to be discussed, mentioned, or considered in a lax, base, or common way.
      5. Rather – **Matthew 6:9; *“Holy and reverend is His name.”*** (**Psalm 111:9, ASV**) (He is holy, therefore His name is holy, therefore it must not be used in any profane, i.e. unholy, way.)
   4. Profane language (adjective) – **Colossians 3:8** – filthy language. (foul speaking, low and obscene speech) (unholy language) (**cf. Ephesians 5:12** – things shameful to speak about.)
      1. **Ephesians 4:29** – no corrupt word; **James 3:10** – blessing and cursing same mouth.
      2. NOTE: The world acknowledges profanity.
      3. Movie maturity ratings take into account curse words, and foul language. (As do music ratings, and tv ratings.)
      4. In many cases, live TV prohibits profanity. (News, Live Sports, etc.)
7. Language in General is Hallowed
   1. Understanding language as a hallowed thing at its core will help us understand the wrong of profanity.
   2. The idea of language is found in eternity with God
      1. **John 1:1** – the Word
         1. Logos – something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension, a computation; specially, (with the article in John) the Divine Expression (i.e. Christ) (STRON
      2. God = rational being able to communicate through language.
      3. Man = created in God’s image – what part of creation can communicate like man?
      4. GOD DESIGNED MAN WITH THE CAPABILITY OF COMMUNICATING WITH HIM – ***“which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.” (1 Corinthians 2:13***, NASB) (**cf. Ephesians 3:4** – that we can understand)
      5. And in prayer we communicate back.
      6. Language, and our ability to communicate, is Divinely given and is a hallowed thing.
   3. Example of Profaning Language – Tower of Babel (**Genesis 11**)
      1. **(vv. 1-4)** – Made use of language to pursue pride, and rebel against God’s will.
         1. God said – **Genesis 1:28** – fill the earth, not stay in one place.
      2. **(vv. 5-9)** – God showed His disdain for such and confused speech, causing them to scatter.
      3. Their one language given by God was to unite them in service to Him, not in rebellion.
      4. Therefore, they PROFANED SPEECH AND LANGUAGE – used that which was holy in an unholy way.
8. Profanity is a Linguistic Manifestation of the Inner Man
   1. **Matthew 15:18-20** – what comes out of the mouth from the heart defiles.
   2. Profanity – unholy speech – COMES FROM UNHOLY PEOPLE.
   3. Profaning speech, or holy things – DONE BY UNHOLY PEOPLE.
   4. Characteristic of the old man – **Colossians 3:8-10**
9. God Forbids Profanity
10. The Christian is an Instrument of God
    1. Created for good works – **Ephesians 2:10** (Includes speech – **Colossians 3:17**)
    2. Do all to God’s glory – **1 Corinthians 10:31**
    3. Our bodies are instruments of righteousness – **Romans 6:12-14** – present them as such.
11. Language is Designed by God for Good
    1. **1 Peter 2:1-3** – when we obey the gospel we lay aside evil speaking.
    2. Speak as the oracles of God – **1 Peter 4:11** (Certainly speak God’s word, but also speak as God speaks. We ought not utter anything that is not befitting God’s character as we are to be imitating Him.)
    3. Praise God – **Psalm 105:1-2**
    4. To evangelize – **Mark 16:15**
    5. Seasoned speech to edify and impart grace – **Colossians 4:5-6; Ephesians 4:29**
12. The Christian is Not to be Conformed to the World
    1. Christians aren’t to conform to the world – **Romans 12:2**
       1. Profanity is characteristic of the unholy.
       2. Our speech will betray us – **Matthew 26:73-74** (to Peter when denying Jesus – claimed not one of the disciples – **V. 74** – THEN, TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF BEING ONE OF THEM HE BEGAN TO CURSE) (**cf. James 3:11-12** – by it we will be known)
       3. **Proverbs 6:12** – perverse mouth is of the wicked.
    2. Proposed purposes for profanity (Pinker, Steven (2007) The Stuff of Thought. Viking Press. ISBN 978-0-670-06327-7) (Wikipedia):
       1. Abusive swearing – intended to offend, intimidate or otherwise cause emotional or psychological harm.
          1. **Ephesians 4:29, 31** – our speech should not be to injure, but edify.
       2. Cathartic swearing – used in response to pain or misfortune.
          1. **Philippians 4:6-7** – should give our troubles to God for release and peace.
       3. Dysphemistic swearing – used to convey that the speaker thinks negatively of the subject matter, and to make the listener do the same.
          1. Dysphemism – the substitution of a disagreeable, offensive, or disparaging expression for an agreeable or inoffensive one. (Webster)
          2. **Ephesians 4:15** – we are simply to speak the truth. Not put a negative or positive spin on something, but let it be seen for what it is.
          3. **1 Peter 2:11-12** – we may be a victim of dysphemistic swearing, but our actions show differently. (Let us not be the offender of such.)
       4. Emphatic swearing – intended to draw additional attention to what is considered to be worth paying attention to.
          1. **James 5:12** – we should let our words speak for themselves.
          2. **Matthew 5:37** – from the evil one.
       5. Idiomatic swearing – used for no other particular purpose, but as a sign that the conversation and relationship between speaker and listener is informal.
          1. **1 Timothy 4:12, 16** – we don’t conform to the linguistic norms of those around us, but serve as an example.
          2. The conversations of those in the world are needlessly laced with profanity – such words serve no purpose.
          3. OUR WORDS SHOULD BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN – **Matthew 12:36-37**
    3. Euphemisms
       1. Sadly, what is heard among some of God’s people is not plain profanity, but euphemistic profanity. However, this is no better.
       2. Euphemism – the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant. (Webster)
       3. Example – **1 Corinthians 15:20** – fallen asleep = died.
          1. They knew what Paul referred to.
          2. Paul intended for them to think of death.
       4. Profane euphemisms are still profanities! Even if you don’t intend anything unholy by them, they are unholy!
       5. IF WE ARE NOT TO BE CONFORMED TO THE WORLD, THEN WE SHOULD NOT BE TRYING TO BE LIKE THE WORLD. EUPHEMISMS SHOW A DESIRE TO BE LIKE THE WORLD, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT SUCH IS WRONG.
          1. It is trying to serve two masters – **Matthew 6:24**
          2. The master of purity, and the master of filthiness – SUCH IS FOOLISH!
13. Avoiding Profanity
14. Spend Time in God’s Word – **Philippians 4:8**
15. Spend Time in Prayer – **1 Thessalonians 5:17** – if the one we talk to the most is God, our speech will be transformed.
16. Avoid Evil Company – **1 Corinthians 15:33; Romans 13:14** – when we surround ourselves with people, and entertainment that uses profanity we provide for the flesh and will be corrupted.

**Conclusion**

1. Profanity is condemned in scripture.
2. We are to avoid it at all costs and speak in a manner that is pleasing to God.
3. We should pray often in this way – **Psalm 19:14; 141:3**