

# A Study Of Moral Issues: Inappropriate Language

**Introduction.** With my lips, I can accomplish considerable good. I can offer words of praise to God (Psalm 51:15; Hebrews 13:15). I can offer words of encouragement to my fellow man (Mark 5:36; Acts 27:22). However, I can also use my tongue for terrible purposes (James 3:5-6), so I need to be reminded of areas where I can watch my language so it can be praiseworthy to God, and I can walk worthy of my calling (Ephesians 4:1).

To give you a sense of how badly a lesson like this is needed, I want to open with an example of how much profanity is available to our young people. The rapper/R&B singer Drake's newest album, "Scorpion," which was released on June 29, became the first to score one billion streams in its first week and also debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 album chart. "Scorpion" also gave Drake seven songs in the top 10 Billboard Hot 100 singles chart. That beat a record of five simultaneous songs by The Beatles in 1964 when the British band was at the height of its fame. The album contains 25 tracks, and 23 of them are labeled as "explicit."

We are going to consider four areas of speech and offer information that will make you a more holy person and more respected for your pure language.

## ***I. Cursing And Crude Language***

- A. Cursing means "to make light of something serious, to bring a serious matter into contempt, to show no respect; evil, wicked, or obscene talk" (Romans 3:14; Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Colossians 3:8).
- B. So we need to be careful on social media about posts that include profanity or crude language. Cursing and profanity are products of a dirty mind, but dirty jokes and coarse jesting are also ("corrupt communication" and "foolish talking").
- C. One crude word that I have heard too many times from the mouth of Christians is "sucks." If you only knew the origin or etymology of this word, you would think twice about saying it. Please refrain from allowing this word to be a part of your vocabulary. It is ugly, crude, and unbecoming of God's children to use.
- D. Every day, you have the chance to be a leavening influence on the world with your tongue (Matthew 13:33). It's an incredible power you yield!

## ***II. Euphemistic And Profane Language***

- A. Virtually every Christian realizes that vulgar speech and curse words are condemned in the Bible; yet how many saints have been guilty of using "softened" or euphemistic words?
  1. The definition of euphemism is, "The act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive."
  2. Maybe you use words like "golly," "gosh," "gee," "geez," "thank goodness," "darn," "dang," "heck," "good heavens," etc. People who use these words either think nothing about it, or they think they are avoiding foul language.
- B. The Israelites were not to profane ("to wound, defile, or pollute") the name of the Lord (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; cp. 1 Timothy 1:9), Taking the Lord's name in vain was a serious offense to God under the Old Covenant, and no Christian should want to do it today either. But one big habit that many (including

Christians) have is taking the name of God in vain. Taking God's name in vain means what it says: we use God's name in a vain or loose way. The use of His name in expressions like "Oh my God!", "God Almighty!", "Jesus Christ!", "Oh Lord!" etc., to express ourselves in a certain situation does not give God glory. Of course, society has found ways to "not make it so bad." "OMG" is a way of getting the point across without actually saying it, and I have seen plenty of Christians who are guilty of using this acronym.

1. Jesus said that if we speak to God or speak His name, we recognize Him and His name as holy (Matthew 6:9). Therefore, we should not misuse His name.
2. God wants us to use His name but at the same time He wants us to be respectful with it. The use of God's name has to be something that uplifts Him, not downgrades Him.

### **III. Damaging Language**

- A. Along with profanity and euphemisms, one has to refrain from other tongue sins.
  1. Slander (Proverbs 10:18; Mark 7:22; Ephesians 4:31). This is defamation; it is used for a report of evil character (Genesis 37:2; Numbers 13:32).
  2. Talebearing or gossip (Proverbs 11:13; 1 Timothy 5:13; 3 John 10). Other Old Testament references to the talebearer portray him as malicious rather than indiscreet; he is an informer, out to hurt.
  3. Whispering and backbiting (Proverbs 16:28; Romans 1:29-30; 2 Corinthians 12:19-20). One who whispers and murmurs (Proverbs 18:8; 26:20, 22) will destroy close friendships by what he says.
- B. God says He absolutely despises these sins of the tongue (Proverbs 6:16-19).
  1. Five of the seven sins that God hates could be attributed to people who gossip. They enjoy spreading lies, although sometimes gossip can be truthful, but just because some gossip has truth in it does not make it godly.
  2. Gossips work to sow discord among the brethren. Gossips devise wicked plans to discredit and tear down others. Gossips are always looking for more gossip and are running to find out more evil to spread. You cannot trust anything that comes out of their mouth because they want to spread gossip and hurt others.
- C. Damaging language is by no means harmless. God will judge these idle (worthless, careless) words, according to the Savior (Matthew 12:36-37).

### **IV. Religious Language**

- A. I have to base everything in my life off what the Bible says (Colossians 3:17). When I am discussing Bible topics with someone who does not know the scriptures, I need to direct them to the Bible (Isaiah 8:20). Therefore, I do not need to say, "I think," "I believe," or "I feel," but, "Thus saith the Lord" (Titus 2:15; 1 Peter 4:11).
- B. The Corinthians were using correct terminology, but were using it incorrectly in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.
  1. "Church of Christ" is a biblical phrase (Romans 16:16), but if we use the phrase in the same way as denominations, then we are using a biblical

phrase in unbiblical ways and showing that we misunderstand the nature of Christ's church.

- a) "Church" is a collective term encompassing multiple people. As an individual, I cannot possibly be a collective. Furthermore, the phrase "church of Christ" is not the name of an organization that can be added to a role as an adjective.
    - (1) I am a gospel preacher. I am not a "church of Christ preacher." Also, there is no "church of Christ doctrine."
      - (a) There is Christ's doctrine. If we are teaching doctrine that was developed by men, our worship is vain (Matthew 15:9; 2 John 9).
      - (b) We teach the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 6:1) and the doctrine of God (Titus 2:10).
    - (2) Moreover, the phrase "church of Christ" is not the name of an organization that can be used as an adjective to describe the nature of this congregation. We are not a "church of Christ church." This congregation is not part of any larger organization called "the church(es) of Christ" like organizations that call themselves various kinds of Baptist: "Southern Baptist," "Missionary Baptist," "American Baptist," etc.
      - (a) If you are talking about congregations and are trying to find out if it is a faithful church or a church that follows the New Testament, ask those questions.
      - (b) If you are referring to some kind of activity, then ask if Christians are responsible for it.
  - b) If you are in a conversation with people and some of them say, "We are Baptist," and others say, "We are Methodist," and others say, "We are Pentecostal," and others say, "We are Catholic," do not say, "I am church of Christ." I am not "church of Christ," "a church of Christ," or a "COC." I am a disciple of Christ, a saint, or a Christian.
  - c) And do not use the expression "all the other denominations," because the Lord's church is not part of a denomination. Say, "I am just trying to be a Christian only" and see if that will generate a spiritual discussion leading to a study of Christ and His church.
2. Additionally, "prayer list," "church family," and "worship leader" are all examples of the "language of Ashdod" (Nehemiah 13:23-24). While there may be nothing wrong with these terms per se, they betray a denomination background and therefore a denominational mindset.

**Conclusion.** Give deep thought to your speech. We have to bridle the tongue (James 1:26; 3:3), but it is difficult. In Judges 12:6, the Ephraimites proved their ethnicity by mispronouncing "Shibboleth," which led to their death. Will your speech show you are a child of God?