

## WATCH YOUR MOUTH!

I freely confess that I am a bit old-fashioned. I think men should remove their hats when entering a building. It's polite for a man to open a door for a lady and children should learn to say "yes sir" and "no sir." I also believe that one's language demonstrates the quality of the person speaking. Not that long and fancy words mean anything, but that the use of trash talk suggests a person of lesser standing. The past week has offered two glaring examples of people who need a soap rubbed onto their toothbrushes.

A week ago yesterday a news reporter for Fox News, appearing on their morning show Fox and Friends, thought it funny to use a slang word for a bodily function. When a laughing co-anchor rebuked him he began to mimic the word that he had just used. He then very coyly described a body organ. You know that Fox News holds itself out as a bastion of values and conservative journalism. I wrote to them and asked the anchor to do better in the future or find work elsewhere.

This past Wednesday, I opened my copy of the Daphne-Spanish Fort Bulletin newspaper. I was greeted with the same word in a large, front page headline that used similar "potty talk" to introduce a story whose value as a news item was questionable at best. I wrote the editor of the paper and reminded him that a newspaper ought not use such trashy, offensive language.

I am old-fashioned but I do not believe I am some ol' fuddy-duddy. I hold that God's word speaks to the issue of speech and reminds us to use care in the words we select. Writing near the end of his life the Apostle Paul said, "*Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt...*" (Colossians 4:6). Jesus reminds us that our speech directly reflects upon the condition of our hearts. "*What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man*" (Mark 7:19-23). Furthermore, when we talk like the world people reasonably conclude that we are of the world. Instead, let us glorify God (Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 1 Peter 2:12).

Occasionally we may reason that since we do not use "curse words" we have nothing to worry about. But Paul argues that even "foolish talking" ought to be eliminated from our daily habits. Listen to his charge to the Ephesians: "*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks*" (Ephesians 5:1-4). "Foolish talking" and "jesting" translate words that mean silliness and coarse joking or vulgar speech. His conclusion is that if we are to be imitators of God (vs. 1) and are to walk in Christ (vs. 2), there are certain things we ought not do and foul language is one of them.

Habits die hard for sure. But the Christian who strives to be Godly in all of his life can depend upon the transforming power of the Word of God to change his life (Romans 12:2). It is, however, up to us to take the first step and determine to cleanse from our mouths things we would not have in our hands.

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