

TC Ministries

Equipping the Church for the Work of Ministry

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Keeping our Mouth Clean
and our Words Pure

What Christians Believe Series

Tony Case



Is Swearing
mentioned in
the Bible?



Where does
Bad Language
come from?



How to Walk
your Talk



If you would like to know more
about this topic, or have any
questions about the Christian faith:

admin@tcministries.org.au

www.tcministries.org.au

WALK YOUR TALK

Our behaviour as Christians, and the way we choose to live our lives ethically, and morally depends upon our particular world view, cultural background, past experience and present understanding of God's Word. The latter being the foundational standards by which we will be judged.

If our testimony to the grace and favour of God is to be effective in the world we each need a thorough understanding of what God expects of us, especially as we grow in the things of God. The use of "bad", or "offensive", language is rife in our society, and epidemic on our TV and our social media streams.

WHERE DOES BAD OR OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE COME FROM

To 'swear', according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, is to ***"state something on oath, to promise, to say something emphatically, to profess, or to have great belief in something"***. It has positive and very definite applications within the legal and law enforcement professions, and is a form of oath taking - something done carefully, and with great reverence. At least this was the case in times past, in days when a man's word was his bond.

To 'swear' can also carry a much more offensive meaning. When used as 'bad' or 'offensive' language this same dictionary described this as ***"to use profane oaths to express anger or expletives"***.

If we then pursue the meaning of the word 'profane', we discover that it describes ***"something that is not sacred or biblical, but irreverent, blasphemous"***. The idea comes from a root meaning of something outside of the temple, not considered sacred or acceptable to God.

'Blasphemous', or 'blasphemy', means to talk impiously (without thought or devotion towards God or religious standards or ideals). To utter profanity is to revile (against God) or to slander.

So the root meaning behind profanity, and the use of offensive or bad language commonly known as swearing, is to slander God, to heap scorn upon His creation, and to take out an oath against oneself.

With the flood of this type of language invading our consciousness everywhere we turn, it is no wonder young and old alike use words which offend God and curse man every day of their lives, without thought or concern as to consequence.

For example, the use of expressions such as ***"cor-blimey"*** comes from an old Anglo-Saxon curse against oneself originally meaning "God blind me!" ***"Jesus Christ!"*** is probably one of the most widely used forms of swearing world-wide, no matter what culture or country you travel in. Often cut short to simply ***"Jesus"***, ***"Christ"***, or ***"Jees"***, it is meant as an invective, and not with any thought of reverence or awe. It's funny how we don't shout "Buddha", or "Mohammed" when we hit our finger with a hammer, or burn ourselves on the hot iron, isn't it?

Though debated by modern scholars, traditionally the use of the word 'bloody' was considered a corrupted reference to the cross and the shed blood of Jesus. If so, it is an affront to the gospel and an insult to God.

Similarly, words that related to defecation and common toilet practices are widely used in Australia in all walks of life. These words are actually quite disgusting and unnecessary. They are also offensive to the Holy Spirit, and generally show a certain lack of self-discipline in the person using such words, revealing them to be somewhat ignorant and lacking in basic vocabulary skills.

DO NOT SWEAR, BY HEAVEN OR BY EARTH

“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but let your yes be yes, and your no, no; so that you may not fall under judgment” (James 5:12)

Even substituting “sugar” for something more vulgar is merely an alternative to the same thought patterns and does not fool God one bit.

Our language needs to modify when we come to Christ, and sometimes we need to have our mouths, as well as our minds, washed clean by the Word we receive.

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3)

Using profanity, whether consciously or unconsciously, is a habit we must learn to break if we ever expect to go forward in the things of God, and grow into a mature spiritual person, able to rightly discern the word of truth.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15)

Falling Under Judgement

Has your relationship with God caused a cleaning up of the words you use and the way you use them in your everyday life? If it hasn't, this information might help you determine appropriate and inappropriate language in your faith walk as a believer in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps you know you use language that is inappropriate for a Christian, but cannot seem to stop, or don't actually understand why you need to?

What does it mean *“that you may not fall under judgment”*? How can we ensure that we do not find ourselves at enmity with God, void of His blessing, and open to the attack of the enemy in our health, our finances or our general circumstances?

Clearly our language, from the words we use to the way we use them, will dictate much of the quality of life we experience as believers.

Swearing is generally considered to be uncouth, but it also shows a lack of discipline and understanding of the consequences we are bringing upon ourselves.

Swearing is a form of cursing. Practising bad language, even if only when we are in extreme anger or pain, is like proclaiming a self-fulfilling, and very negative, prophecy over our lives. We open ourselves up to darkness, and our minds and our hearts are corrupted by the thoughts and feelings these words inspire. If we don't think that this has a negative spiritual effect on us, we are quite wrong!

Swearing brings judgment down on us. The words of our mouth can bring death or life, because life and death are in the power of the tongue:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit” (Prov 18:21)

YOU CAN HAVE WHATEVER YOU SAY

The Bible teaches us that we can have whatever we say, if we say it right!

“Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you” (Mark 11:23-24)

When positive, active faith is mingled with the words that we speak, it is possible to move mountains. If not literally then certainly in the figurative sense.

Confessing what we believe to be the truth is faith in action. Confessing what God has said to be true is the fundamental principle behind mountain-moving faith.

Confessing our feelings of frustration and anger, or any other strong emotion, by using undisciplined and offensive language, shows a lack of depth, and a deficiency of character, which God will be compelled to address sooner or later.

Feelings Are Important

Speaking positively about what is actually true, rather than what we feel about certain things, is a key to having an effective faith walk. To be led by our emotions (how we feel) rather than by our faith (what we know to be true in God) is a sign of both natural and spiritual immaturity.

Spiritual maturity can be defined as being in control of our feelings and responding to life's challenges in ways that are not reactive, but loving and glorifying God.

Achieving this consistently is often a gradual process that requires effort, determination and discipline. Change comes as we respond to prompting and power of the Holy Spirit.

Our feelings actually follow our patterns of thought and behaviour, and are often driven by habits - both good and bad. It therefore follows we must learn to control these thoughts and behaviour patterns in order to "feel" good, either more often, or most of the time:

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2)

"Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:22-24)

Those who are able to build the correct disciplines of right thinking, right behaviour, right reactions and right confession, which includes keeping their language in check, will achieve great results in their Christian walk.

Keeping our speech sweet, and not reacting inappropriately when confronted with problems, pain or frustration, is simply a good habit which must be learned to replace a bad one. Condition ourselves to speak appropriately, and swear not!

"Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov 16:32)

How To Stop Swearing

Like most bad habits, swearing can be controlled, and eliminated completely, when the person involved decides that swearing is wrong, contrary to the Word of God, and offensive to the Holy Spirit. Bad language is a choice, a learned habit. To stop it is simply a matter of choosing to stop, and finding alternative ways to express pain, frustration, surprise or annoyance. If you slip, remember 1 John 1:9:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

Each time we make a stand for righteousness, and for the kingdom, we become stronger, and more of an overcomer in life. Our faith self-respect grows, as does our confidence and vocabulary, God will honour our faithfulness and obedience.