

Little Words With Big Offenses

One of the songs in which we have often sung in church services is entitled, "The World's Bible." The second stanza of this song states, "We are the only Bible the careless world will read. We are the sinner's gospel. We are the scoffer's creed. We are the Lord's last message given in deed and word. What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?"

Each Christian must strive to make the best "imprint" upon the world that he possibly can. If our type, however, has become covered with the dirt and grime of sin, we will not be able to make a good mark on the paper of life -- and, sadly, the far-surpassing news of the gospel will not be read by others in our lives.

One way in which we can "blur" our message to the world is by giving ourselves over to improper speaking. Paul exhorted Timothy by saying, "*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Virtually every Christian realizes that vulgar speech, curse words, swear words, using the Lord's name in vain, etc., are condemned in the Bible; yet how many saints have unknowingly been guilty of such by using words of a more "softened" nature? Such is the case when using many of today's euphemisms.

Would you know a euphemism if you heard or spoke one? The definition of the word euphemism is, "The act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive." Not all euphemisms are wrong. For instance, to say one has "passed away" or "is at rest" is euphemistic of simply saying one has "died." This is so because the former phrases are milder to our palate of reasoning. In this foregone example, the expressions "passed away" or "is at rest" are not standing for something bad and would, unquestionably, not be wrong for one to use. Also, in the advertising world, it surely sounds much better for the salesperson to refer to their cars as being "economical" rather than "cheap." Or if I were a garbage man, to many it would sound better if I referred to myself as simply a "sanitary engineer." In all these examples the euphemistic renderings would be okay to use because they are not signifying anything which would be improper. But what would be some examples of euphemisms that are wrong for a Christian to use?

The following citations are just a few in the list of offensive euphemisms. All taken from the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary:

- "golly" is a euphemism for God which first appeared in 1775 and is used as a mild oath or to express surprise.
- "gee" is a euphemism for Jesus which first appeared in 1895 and is used as an introductory expletive or to express surprise or enthusiasm.
- "gosh" is a euphemism for God which first appeared in 1757 and is used as a mild oath or to express surprise.

Perhaps you use a word listed above. Did the definition and the history of the word surprise you? Maybe you use words like "thank goodness," "darn," heck," "good heavens," etc. Although I would like to mention more so that there will be no mistake in recognizing euphemisms, they are just not fit to publish in this article. People who use these words think they are avoiding foul language or even think nothing about it whatsoever.

As we learn the English language and we develop a vocabulary it can be hard (but not impossible) to stop using certain words. We come into this world knowing nothing, only to gain knowledge, then to have some of that knowledge purposely forgotten.

The Christian's language and conduct are always to be under consideration. Colossians 3:8 says, "*But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*" The Christian should strive not only in his conduct but also within his vocabulary to be holy before God and his fellowman. I think it impossible of Christ to have used a euphemism during His life. That being true, I must strive to emulate my Lord within not only my body, but also my vocabulary as well.

I have had to practice sound vocabulary, and strive to overcome my upbringing. It is not impossible, for the scriptures teach that all things are possible with God (Matthew 19:26). Therefore, we all can reprogram our minds, our lives and yes, even our vocabulary! We are to be a living sacrifice unto God and that would include our speech. Let me exhort us all to speak a wholesome vocabulary. It will not only help us in winning souls for Christ, but it will also help us to sustain ourselves with God. There is no excuse for anyone using foul language. Profanity is a sin against God. It matters not whether it be mild or harsh, it is the same. It is disrespectful, sacrilegious and irreverent! We ought to give more

thought to our speech, for we will render account for it in the judgment (Matthew 12:36).

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