

# THE TRENTON BULLETIN

## Profanity (Roger Shouse)

*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Colossians 4:6)*

Sunday night, I led a discussion in our teen devo. We had around twenty or more teenagers there. They are a lively bunch and a great group of kids. We were talking about things that bothered us. I had a sheet for them to fill out called "The bothered factor." I asked some questions about what bothered them, and from that, we talked about what we ought to do when we are bothered.

The first question on their sheet was to list the top three things that bother you at school. I was expecting answers like homework or the food was terrible. Some listed a teacher or two who were hard. Some mentioned being picked on by others.

But overall, nearly every one of the teens listed on their sheets cursing and profanity from other kids at school. It was nearly 100%.

This is becoming a regular problem in the media. Some entertainer lashes out a profanity-filled explosion at her audience. Some politicians unload an angry tirade that is laced with profanity. Some sports figures can't get through an interview without using profanity. It's in the movies. It's in modern music. It's trickling in TV commercials. It's everywhere.

I suppose people think that profanity and cursing give more punch to their words. Often, a person is angry, and that's the default word they turn to when they are upset. We've become a cursing society. But it bothers me that young teens are experiencing it already in their lives.

Our verse is directed towards God's people. Our speech must be with grace. It must be

seasoned. We must think first and then speak. We cannot allow anger to choose our words for us. And with all of this cursing going on around us, our homes must become safe havens where the world is kept outside.

Parents must help their kids express themselves with words that honor God, even when they are upset, disappointed, or angry. It is so easy to borrow what we hear from others all the time. It's easy to allow those foul words to become our words. In the moment of a crisis or a meltdown, our words can reveal much about our character and our heart. All the good that we try to do for others can be lost in a moment because we explode with words that reflect the world rather than Christ.

What do we do? If kids are cursing at school, what are they doing outside of school? Where are they getting these words? How are they getting by using these words? Most likely, it started at home and in an environment of little rules and no discipline, those behaviors only grow. Watching shows without restrictions will only feed more into young and impressionable minds. Not having a steady diet of God and His holiness in your life will only give a green light to cursing. Parents curse. Teachers curse. They curse on TV. They curse in the movies. No one is apologizing. No one is putting a stop to it. No one has a guard or a filter on their mouth. And, in such environments, it shouldn't shock us that so much cursing is happening at school.

I am thankful that all of our teens listed cursing as one of the top three things that bothered them at school. It bothers them. They are sensitive to it. They recognize that it's not right. Thank you to their moms and dads who create a different atmosphere at home. Thank you to these sensitive hearts that love the Lord and, see the difference, and understand that the culture of cursing is not right nor Biblical.



On the way home from the devotion, I thought of a guy from a while back who I was trying to do Bible study with. He was rough. His language was rough. About every fifth word that came out was a curse word. He'd say it, then he'd apologize. It got to the point where he was apologizing more than he was talking. I told him to apologize to God. I told him to take a time out. I asked him not to say anything. Just listen. I told him to think really hard. Then I asked him to tell me his story. Tell it to me slowly, real slowly, and don't use any bad words. That didn't work. He couldn't do it. Profanity was so deep into his fiber that he still did even when he tried not to.

Can a person ever stop cussing? Yes. Our words are our choices. It begins by thinking first. It changes when we try to speak with words that honor Christ. It changes when we enhance our vocabulary. It changes when we change our environment, and we put some distance between us and other cussers. I've known folks who made that change. With the help of God and determination, it can happen.

Our words are windows to our souls. What we talk about and how we say things allows others to see what is really important to us. Being slow to speak, as James puts it, really helps. Catch yourself before the words come out. Change them, and things will be better. Keep doing that, and before long, those wrong words won't even be the first things that come to your mind.

I am glad that our homes and our congregations can be places where the wrong words are rare, and when they are spoken, forgiveness, correction, and change follow rather than laughter and applause.

It doesn't take long for people to notice that you talk differently. Keep it up. Your influence in your words may be the starting point of helping others.

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, **filthy language out of your mouth.** (Colossians 3:8)

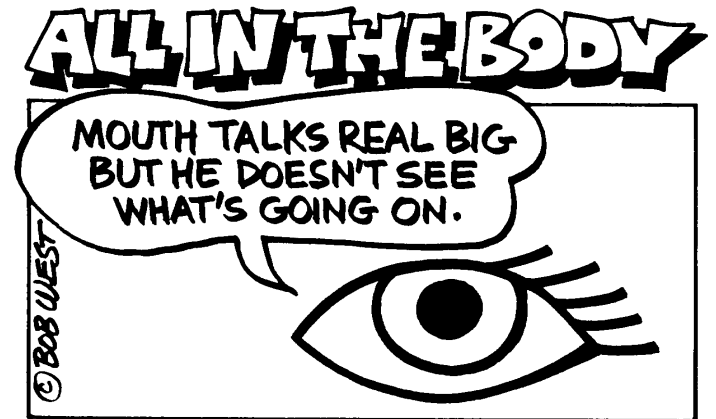
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Profanity is a way of escape for the man who runs out of ideas; the effort of a feeble mind to express itself forcibly.

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With today's movies, if we took out all the bad language, we'd go back to silent films. (Bob Hope)

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### Four Ways To Cure A Cold Or End A Quarrel (Dee Bowman)

1. Don't let your temperature get too high.
2. Stop the sniffles.
3. Take your medicine.
4. Sleep it off.

### The Horse-Maker (Donald Grey Barnhouse)

"Mother," said a little boy after coming from a walk, "I have seen a man who makes horses." "Are you sure?" asked the mother. "Yes," he replied, "He had a horse nearly finished when I saw him; he was just nailing on his back feet." We may smile at the little boy who had such little experience in life that he could mistake a blacksmith for the Creator. But what shall we say of the professors who pick up a fossil or two and make learned pronouncements concerning millions of years of evolution. The developments of a pink-eyed guinea pig or a many-petaled flower are no more "proofs" of evolution than a horseshoer is of creation.