

GNITN

#820

End Times And Expletives

Watch Your Mouth!

I know growing up I heard that if I said certain words I would be punished. And it wasn't just around family, but at school. One day in junior high school I learned a new word over the summer and decided to be clever and use it when telling a story in front of the whole class. I was dealt with rather strongly by the teacher and in retrospect she was right. But the lesson was learned and I made sure to mind my mouth going forward. However, once I became a Christian I just instinctively knew that there were words that weren't supposed to be spoken if I wanted to follow the Bible. My conscience told me but so did society. Now, I never had my mouth washed out with soap, but I didn't need to experience that to avoid curse words as they are known. Interestingly, words that are considered foul or vulgar today weren't even known as such in previous generations or cultures or even other nations. But somehow we know when a word is cursing. In an [article](#) on the topic I found this:

Don't deny it: Sometimes, swearing just feels good. And it's becoming increasingly clear that dropping the occasionally profanity bomb is actually good for us, too — at least, [according to science](#).

Research has shown that swearing can [boost pain tolerance](#), foster emotional resilience and signal positive traits like [verbal fluency](#) and [honesty](#). What's more, spewing obscenities has the potential to impact our bodies as well as our minds, providing stress relief and even a slight [boost in physical performance](#).

Given their ubiquity in society, it can seem like swear words simply sprouted into existence. But where, exactly, does profane language come from? From ancient Rome to the Renaissance to today, there's lots that the history of swearing can teach us about how taboos, language and culture evolve — and it can provide a glimpse of the future of (mostly) four-letter words.

You would think from all that there is some kind of virtue in swearing. I tend to disagree and so does God.

And He's Not Joking

Even in the article I cited, religion showed up when discussing cursing:

*Historically, Bergen continues, taboo language has tended to revolve around religion; in Judeo-Christian and Muslim traditions, profanity emerges when words selected for specific functions are stripped of their intent and used outside of religious contexts. (In Latin, the word *profanus* translates to "outside the temple," signifying words that desecrate sacred precepts.)*

The article does give us a lot of interesting information, however in today's world it seems like the verbal crudeness is seen more often in comedy. We have dirty comedians and clean ones. Now however, it is rare when a comedian doesn't use swear words. They are referred to as dry comedians because they don't use profanity. One man who is known to cuss quite a bit was challenged to do an entire show without cursing and he said it was extremely difficult, but he did it. As Christians we need the Bible to be our guide and it does deal with this topic as an article from [gotquestions.org](#) tells us:

Coarse jesting and crude joking are attempts to elicit laughs by crossing a line into impropriety. The use of foul language, sexual innuendo, or rude or racist comments means that a so-called joke had to appeal to baser instincts in order to earn laughs. [Ephesians 5:3–4](#) warns against coarse jesting: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.” It is interesting that coarse jesting is included in this list of more grievous sins that are “improper for God’s holy people.”

So the Bible does tell us that regardless of how a word got to be known as coarse, we should strive to use our words carefully and that would also mean avoiding obscene ones.

A Bad Witness

The article goes on to note that even if we were known for using curse words before we became Christians, we certainly know to stop using them after our lives changed. As anyone who’s read the book of **James** knows, controlling out tongues is difficult but needed:

Coarse jesting and crude joking do not reflect the new life we have in Christ. God desires to transform us by renewing our minds and sanctifying our spirits ([Romans 12:1–2](#); [2 Corinthians 10:5](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#)). We are walking temples, dedicated to the glory of God ([1 Corinthians 6:19–20](#)). Physical body parts that were once dedicated to sin become “instruments of righteousness” ([Romans 6:12–13](#)). Our mouths are part of our bodies and a significant part of that transformation. From our mouths should come worship and praise, edification and encouragement, truth and blessing ([James 3:9–12](#)). Controlling our mouths is part of true religion: “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his religion is worthless” ([James 1:26](#)).

Worthless? Well that hits hard doesn’t it? While this article only addresses humor, the overall point is made. The best adage all goes back to those popular wristbands with WWJD on them: *In everything we do, we should seek to glorify God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#)). This includes our joke-telling and attempts at humor. Laughter is great, but we should learn to control our words, judging whether or not they belong in a body that houses the Holy Spirit. Would Jesus think that joke is great? Would He find humor in foul language, demeaning jabs, or sexual innuendo? If not, then we should refrain from that type of speech. Coarse jesting and crude joking do not need to come from a mouth that is supposedly dedicated to His honor.*

So yes, your words can and often do affect others even if we try and explain them away by just saying we were joking:

The Bible says that our [words are powerful](#), and we need to treat them with respect ([Proverbs 18:21](#)). Part of maturing in Christ is learning to filter what comes out of our mouths. Some people give themselves a pass on questionable banter and coarse jesting because “it’s just a joke.” But [Proverbs 26:19](#) warns against those who hide behind the phrase “I was only joking!” Jokes do not give us an excuse to sin.

But Is It A Sign?

Somewhere in my mind I could swear I thought that using foul language was a sign of the last days. Yes, I am aware of the pun I just used, but still I mused if using obscenities was a prophetic sign of the days just before Jesus returns. While I can’t make as strong a case as I desired, I think

a case can be made especially in light of all those Bible verses alluded to above starting with the Apostle Paul's words to his young protégé Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:1–5**:

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. (ESV)

Words like "abusive", "slanderous", and "without self-control" point toward a deterioration in the way people treat and speak to one another. The Bible doesn't specifically say that coarse language itself will increase as a sign of the end times, but it does describe a general moral decline and increase in ungodliness - which would include the way people speak. And we are living in those times, the last days mentioned. Timing is the key here as well. Paul tells us when these difficult times will occur. He notes that it will be in "the last days" and so we need to scrutinize that phrase to figure out what he means.

It's Always Been This Bad

Obviously the advice had to mean something to Timothy, so was he only talking about those days alone? Yes and no. Yes, Timothy should definitely watch for these people in his church and environment. It would be silly to think it didn't have that connotation. However, the Greek word used for "last" gives a future meaning as well. The word is *ésxatos* (es'-khat-os) (from *esxaton*, "end, last") – properly, last, final (the furthest, extreme-end). 2078/*esxatos* ("future things"), the root of "eschatology" is "the study of last things." This includes future Bible prophecy, the end-times, and life after death ("the after-life"). You will notice that the word is used when we talk about prophecy and so the interpretation that it is also talking about the very last of the last times is seen in this verse as well. We're not stretching this point at all. We could go the other direction and make this a generic list of things to watch for in all generations and no one period of time is different than any other, but other parts of the Bible caution us from this sentiment. Jesus told us what to look for in the various Olivet discourses and Paul adds to his cautions as he also tells us about the time right before the Rapture of the church. You see, when you put it all together, rather than making it generic, we need to see it as more specific in our time. So yes, Timothy was right to heed the advice of Paul for his time, but things will get far worse the closer we get to the last days. In other words, this detailed list will only heighten in its impact as we see the Rapture and the Second Coming drawing closer and closer. This is why we need to take a closer look at these things now. And yes, the coarse talk is only going to get worse.