

Bad Language

And coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but rather giving thanks. - Ephesians 5:4 HCSB

There was recently a show where a bunch of potential mixed martial arts fighters all lived in the same house for a while and competed with each other for a chance at fighting in the big leagues. The owner of the big league, not a fighter himself but a shrewd business man, came onto the show to deal with a problem. You know how they bleep out the cuss words on TV? His conversation sounded like a telegraphic message! I thought that it was interesting that the guys who actually were tough warriors didn't feel as much a need to swear as the guy who wasn't. Can you say overcompensation? Needless to say, no one was really impressed by his toughness.

Our language says more about us than we realize. There is more communication going on than just the definition of the words we speak. The tone of our voice, the level of vocabulary, the speed at which we speak – all these things tell even an untrained ear much about us.

What we say reveals not only that state of our minds, but the condition of our hearts. Our emotional and spiritual state is revealed in our language. Since God is primarily concerned with our spiritual health, this means our words leave us subject to judgment and we will one day give an account for every careless word we speak.¹

Like most other bad habits, we cannot simply quit doing the negative. The bad habit must be replaced by a positive one, otherwise the old habit will resurface in the vacuum we have left. Paul says that instead of trash talk, our language should be characterized by gratitude. If we allow coarse and foolish talking or crude joking to dominate our conversations, it won't be long until we sin in other ways with our tongues.

When our conversation is crude, coarse and rude, we are in very real sense misusing God's name. I don't mean that we are using Hashem's name as a cuss word (though that too is a possibility when talking foolishly), but that when we claim His name as His children and misbehave, we are committing the sin of chillul Hashem – desecration of the Name.² You can be sure that the Lord will not tolerate that.³

We are commanded to put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander and filthy language from our mouths.⁴ We should replace those things with gracious speech that is seasoned with the salt of God's Word appropriately applied to each listener's condition and need.⁵

Our manner of speech is influencing others one way or the other and a wise person will guard his mouth lest he fall into ruin.⁶ Let us set aside unsuitable language and instead be examples to others in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and purity.⁷

¹ Matthew 12:34-37; Luke 6:45

² **Chillul Hashem** – (KHIH-lool hah-SHEM); This word means the desecration of the name of the Lord. It is identifying oneself as a righteous person but living an unethical, immoral, unworthy life and thus bringing shame to Hashem's name and His people.

³ Exodus 20:7

⁴ Colossians 3:8

⁵ Colossians 4:6

⁶ Proverbs 13:#

⁷ 1 Timothy 4:12