

Melva's Corner



The Language of Our Time

(A Lesson from the Don Imus Incident)

April 23, 2007

(Luke 6:45)

Central Truth: Our speech both betrays and steers our hearts. So let's make a commitment to God with our speech.

So often today, the polite and courteous edges of our everyday speech are falling away. While the use of crude language, profane speech, off color humor, and sexist slang are all often considered by some as necessary and 'streetwise' mainstream . . . we are also finding this kind of speech is filtering into the business and political world as well. In the everyday world of give and take, even simple words of courtesy like "Please," and "Thank you," are forgotten. Sarcastic "put downs" and "smart mouth" jabs are admired rather than reprimanded.

What are we, as Christians, supposed to make of this? Do we run the risk of being labeled as irrelevant duds, party poopers, and self-righteous prudes? Do we behave differently than the masses that choose the language of the gutter over gracious speech?

Why not run a little test for a month? With a new month just around the corner, why not take the month of May and intentionally work on our speech? Here are a few suggestions to help you with the challenge:

1. Make a commitment to read through the book of Proverbs each week and highlight every passage on the use of our speech; then try to intentionally put these principles into practice. (Try different translations for each passage. You will find an amazing amount of practical, clear teaching on your speech in Proverbs!)

2. **Consciously speak kindly and courteously, especially to folks that serve you. Don't let status or social conventions deter you from treating those whom society places beneath you on the social ladder and those who are paid to serve with kindness, respect, and dignity.**
3. **Refuse to return undignified and ungodly speech, especially when it is targeted at you.**
4. **Refuse to participate in gossip. This doesn't mean to put down folks who are; just simply walk away politely when someone is engaged in it and don't pass any gossip on to other people.**

At the end of the month, see if you can notice how people respond to you. I truly believe you will be surprised at how many people notice and respond favorably. While a few folks will try to take advantage of you, many will noticeably appreciate it because so few folks practice God's principles of godly and respectful speech.



I can still remember a good friend nearly 15 years ago talked to me about the moral melt down in his office. He said he could trace it to the time when he and other Christians began to let their language slip. It was the first and biggest step down a long road of moral decay. Our speech both betrays and steers our hearts. So let's make a commitment to God with our speech.

Scriptural References:

"A good person produces good deeds from a good heart, and an evil person produces evil deeds from an evil heart. Whatever is in your heart determines what you say." (Luke 6:45)