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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

Article Title:

GUTTER MOUTH

Where I grew up in Missouri a person whose language included various curse words would be called a “gutter mouth.” Cursing, at least in public, was frowned upon by most people back then. It was characteristic of the undesirable and the rebellious in society. Today it is much different. One cannot turn on the television, watch a movie, walk down the street or through the halls of our schools without hearing a constant barrage of curse words. Movie stars, politicians, those who play professional sports and even very small children are heard cursing, swearing and using the name of God in vain. It is one of the symptoms of a society which has turned away from God and the guidance of His Word.

Does it matter what comes out of one’s mouth? Yes, it matters to God. Jesus said, “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36-37). Cursing is no trivial matter. The words one uses to communicate to others are important and have a direct connection to one’s eternal destiny. It is inconsistent to praise God with one’s words and use that same mouth to utter curse words. As the inspired James put it, “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (See James 3:5-12).

Many people underestimate the power of the spoken word. God describes the tongue as “a world of iniquity” and that it has the power to defile “the body and set on fire the course of nature” (James 3:5-6). The words one speaks can produce emotional hurt, destroy relationships and ruin reputations. Once one speaks a word it can never be unspoken. The damage is often already done even if one regrets what he has said and apologizes for it.

Using the name of God as a curse or an exclamation is so common in our day that most people think little of it. However, it is a much bigger deal than one may think. When God gave Israel His spiritual law it contained these words, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7). The Psalmist wrote that it is God’s enemies and those who hate Him who take his name in vain” (Psalm 139:20-21). God should always be held in reverence for “Holy and reverend is His name” (Psalm 119:9). “Who shall not fear You and glorify Your Name. For You alone are holy...” (Revelation 15:4). We glorify and exalt God when we keep our speech free from cursing. We demean God when we use His name in vain. Please, don’t be a “gutter mouth.”