

## What Is Coming Out of Your Mouth?

I've often wondered why it is that some individuals have a propensity for swear words. Though otherwise intelligent, articulate, and polite, there exists a need of some sort to spew "profane utterances deemed contrary to public morality standards."

Laws regarding profanity are still on the books in many states. The law in one such state, says, "If any person shall utter or speak any obscene or lascivious language or word in any public place, or in the presence of females, or in the presence of children under ten (10) years of age, he shall be liable to a fine of not more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00), or imprisonment for not more than thirty (30) days, or both."

Historically, George Washington issued the following to his officers: "The General is sorry to be informed that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice hitherto little known in our American Army is growing into fashion. He hopes that the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it and that both they and the men will reflect that we can little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our army if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this it is a vice so mean and low without any temptation that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

Individuals appeal to their right of free speech to be able to say what they wish, when they wish, to whomever they wish. Even if such were true, just because a person has a right to do something, doesn't mean it is the right thing to do. The apostle Paul said, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29). What part of profanity would fall under the category of "good" or "edifying"?

How is profanity to be characterized? As a chaplet of grace, intelligence (the ability to utilize one's vocabulary in a manner free of "utterances deemed contrary to public morality standards"), and honor; or does it cast shame upon the speaker and embarrassment upon the hearer? What type of fruit does your language bear, grace or shame?

Remember the words of the Lord, who said, "Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). ret