

# The Plague of Profanity

by Jon Courson

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*Profanity is a sin that comes from the evil one and lacks integrity in our speech, but we can stop using it by confessing it as sin, converting it to blessing, and replacing it with words of blessing and edification.*

**Duration:** 38:35

**Scripture:** Proverbs 18:21, Isaiah 6:5, Matthew 5:33-44, James 3:10

**Topics:** "Profanity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the impact of profanity on society and how it desensitizes people to the reality of eternity. He explains that there was a time when words like damnation and hell had a strong impact because they were associated with eternal destruction. However, in today's culture, these words are used casually and frequently, leading to a loss of their significance. The preacher also emphasizes the importance of being careful with the quantity and quality of our speech, quoting verses from the book of James and Matthew. He concludes by urging listeners to distance themselves from profanity and embrace wisdom in their communication.

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## Transcript

Proverbs chapter 8, beginning at verse 6. Here, for I will speak of excellent things, and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness.

There is nothing froward, or withered, or perverse in them. Several years ago, the astronaut Michael Collins, who was also somewhat of an amateur linguist, he declared the average man speaks 25,000 words in any given day. The average woman speaks 30,000 words in any given day.

And Michael Collins said, now the problem is, is I spend my 25,000 words while I'm at work, whereas my wife doesn't start her 30,000 words till I get home. As a people, we have a tendency to talk a lot. And so the Bible talks a lot about that tendency.

The Bible has very much to say about our words and our speech. It has much to say about its quantity. The book of James tells us, let every man be slow to speak and quick to hear.

In other words, you have two ears and one mouth, and it's in that proportion for a reason. We should be twice as ready to hear as we are to speak. Solomon said, in the multitude of words there lacketh not sin.

The more you speak, the more vulnerable you are to saying something you wished you wouldn't have said. It has been said that a wise man speaks when he has something to say, whereas a foolish man speaks just to say something. And so the Bible encourages us to be careful about the quantity of our speech.

But it has much more to say about the quality of our speech, the types of words that we speak. Listen, while I read to you from Ephesians chapter four, verse 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

No corrupt communication. In the book of Colossians chapter three, verse eight, we read, But now put off these things, anger and wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of your mouth. Put off the old man with his deeds.

Filthy communication is to be put far away from our mouths. And then the classic passage in James chapter three. There in verse eight, James talks about the tongue.

And he says, The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, with which we bless God, even the Father, and wherewith we curse men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceeds blessings and cursings? My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a fountain send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter water? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries, either of vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

And so the scriptures speak to us about the quality of the words which we speak. Out of our mouth is not to come blessing one moment and cursing the next. Filthy communication is to be far from us.

And yet we live in a society that is plagued by profanity. And all too often we tolerate, or perhaps sometimes even participate, in profanity, in blasphemy. Now in the text before us, wisdom is personified.

Wisdom is seen as a woman, here in Proverbs chapter eight, who stands on high places, verse two tells us, and cries out to people, cries out to mankind. And she says, Here is wisdom crying out to humanity, calling out to our society. And this woman, wisdom, then says, She speaks only what is righteous.

I will speak of excellent things, she says in verse six. And the opening of my lips shall be right things. Wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

There is nothing perverse in them. How about us? Our society is plagued. Profanity and blasphemy abound.

Now there is a difference between profanity and blasphemy. Blasphemy is using the Lord's name in vain. Causing His name to be bantered about in an ungodly, unrighteous way.

Now I trust that none of us would be guilty with blasphemy. For the Bible has much to say about that. But I'm not so much concerned about blasphemy, which is a little problem to most of us, but rather profanity.

Profanity are those filthy, foul words. They're coarse. They're words that are not necessarily blasphemous, but they're what we might call cussing or cursing.

Coarse, foul, or filthy. In reality, there's probably only 25 to 35 such words. But they're used in all different kinds of combinations.

And they float about freely in our society. In 1940, Clark Gable shocked the world when, at the end of that blockbuster movie, *Gone with the Wind*, he played the part of Rhett Butler, I believe, declared to Scarlett O'Hara, frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn. And when he said that, society was stung.

Newspaper articles were written. A controversy was created. People couldn't believe that the movie industry would have the audacity to insert a word like damn into a movie.

Look how far we've come. Or how far we've fallen. Why now, even watching family shows, family ties and other shows that are geared at the family, the word damn is used not infrequently.

And God is used almost unnoticeably. And hell occurs quite commonly. What is happening? Why has our society gone from a time when we were shocked at a single word to now accepting, now not even noticing when profanity is floating all around us? What's coming down? What's going on? Three things I would like us to consider this morning about profanity.

First, the stupidity of it. Secondly, the source behind it. Thirdly, the solution for it.

First, the stupidity of it. When you get right down to it, profanity is real stupid. It's real dumb.

I mean, here you are. You are putting together your bookshelf. And suddenly as you're hammering a shelf in place, you miss the nail and you pound your thumb.

And you let out with a profane word, with a curse. And you're cursing the very project you're trying to complete. You're slowing down the progress.

You're cursing that which you are trying to come to completion with. It's dumb. It's counterproductive.

You're fixing your car and you drop your wrench. Oh man, that causes you to let out a word of profanity. That's stupid.

For all you are doing now is acting in a counterproductive way, releasing via the tongue, curse. And the Bible has much to say about the power of the words that we speak. Later on, we'll see Proverbs declares that the power of life and death is in the tongue.

So when you curse a project you're working on or something you're involved with, you're actually being tremendously counterproductive. How much better it would be to stop and pray, Lord, this bookshelf is not coming together. Now that is productive.

But to curse, you're fighting against the very project you're attempting to complete. It's stupid. Then why do people do it? Why do people curse? What is the reason for cursing? What is the source or the spirit behind it? There is a spirit behind this plague of profanity.

And Jesus, I think, gives us insight to it in Matthew 5. If you want to turn there, feel free to. Matthew 5. Verse 33. Here is our Lord addressing His disciples there on the mountain as He gives profound insight.

He says, Again, verse 33. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. Verse 37.

But let your communication be yea, yea, or nay, nay. For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Let your yes be yes or your no be no.

Anything more than that comes from evil. If you have a new King James Bible or a newer version, it is correctly translated, comes from the evil one. There is a personal pronoun in the sentence structure and literally that is the correct translation of the Greek phrase.

Anything more than yes or no comes from the evil one. Now, Jesus is talking about swearing and about oaths. True, He is not speaking about profanity.

But there is an insight here that will help us to understand the source behind profanity. Now, Jesus was saying, I want to cultivate a people. I want to develop disciples who will not have to go around saying, I swear it's true.

Honest. I'll take an oath by Jerusalem, the holy city, that what I'm saying is correct. Jesus said, you don't need to buttress your words.

You don't need to underscore your words with oaths, but rather be people who simply say yes or no. And your word is as good as gold. What you say, you mean.

And you mean what you say. Anything more than that comes from the evil one. Trying to get you to reinforce your words, it means that many times you speak lacking integrity.

I caught myself the other day telling a group of elders, I said, you know, honestly, brothers, and it suddenly hit me, why did I say honestly? Am I implying that what I say most of the time is not? Why do I say honestly? Or to tell you the truth, isn't that a silly phrase? To tell you the truth, which means, now I'm really going to be speaking truth. You see, that should never be. Jesus is saying, your yea should be yea, your nay should be nay.

Anything more than that is coming from an evil source. Lacking integrity in what you speak. My kids, I shared with you a couple of weeks ago, have gotten into this habit of saying, Jesse, I promise what I'm saying.

I promise. And Jesse would say, Christy, I promise it's true. Mommy said, or I promise.

Daddy said. And so we sat the kids down and said, don't say you promise anymore. Don't want to hear that around here.

You guys have fallen into a bad habit. Jesus said, let your yes be yes, and your no be no. Well, now, in the last few weeks, I've heard all through the house, Jesse, I guarantee.

I guarantee. Guaranteeing. Promising.

To tell you the truth. Honestly, I swear, swear to God, or whatever phrases might be used, Jesus says the source is from the evil one. You are buttressing, you are reinforcing your words because you lack integrity in your speech.

Now, how does that apply to profanity? Obviously, people say, I'm going to prove I'm really mad and blankety blank, blank, blank, just to show you how mad I am. Or, I'm really macho and manly, blankety blank, blank, blank. To prove you're mad, to prove you're serious, to prove you're manly, whatever you're trying to do, to reinforce your words with profanity, it is coming from the pit.

It is an instrument or an attempt of Satan to cause you to lack integrity in your speech and honesty. Now, wisdom says, you will never hear me speak a perverse thing. No perverted word will come out of my mouth.

No obscenity. No profanity. The one who walks in wisdom will put away such communication.

Well, why, you say, would Satan be interested in getting us to learn the language of profanity? Why would he get us to be involved in those words? Three or four reasons I want you to be aware of. First of all, number one, profanity desensitizes people to the reality of eternity. Number one.

You see, there was a time in our culture not too many years ago when somebody said damnation and people listened carefully because they knew it was being talked about. Eternal destruction. When people said hell, it had an impact because it's a real place.

But today, you hear damn or hell all the time. In conversations among people, on the screens at the theater, on the TV, and even family shows. And consequently, it desensitizes people.

No longer does it have the same impact. Satan has scored a real tricky maneuver in getting people to take these things lightly or not even notice them. He did the same thing, I believe, with red devil fireworks.

He makes himself a comical character. A red suit, a pitchfork, two horns, and a pointed tail. It's laughable.

The Bible says Satan is an angel of light and he has cleverly chosen to portray himself as a comical character that people might not take him seriously. And so too with profanity. People are desensitized to the reality of hell, to the reality of damnation, to the reality of these things which are eternal.

They no longer are shocked or dealing with them because they have become desensitized towards them. Secondly, it debases the human body. Most of the profane words, or a good chunk of them, deal with human bodily parts or intimate activities.

Now why would the enemy be interested in having us talk about our private parts or our sexual activity in a profane way? Well, psychologists are beginning to provide an answer for us. Not intentionally, mind you. But nonetheless, psychologists are, to their surprise and shock, finding that the born-again Christian has the highest percentage of sexual satisfaction in marriage.

A recent Red Book study came out on that and it was quite surprising to the psychologists who were involved in it. And psychologists are now saying in a number of reports that we've been reading that those that talk loosely or are involved in pornography visually, rather than enhancing their sexuality, it erodes it and it destroys it. People that are involved in pornography or speaking evilly, profanely, instead of becoming more sexual, they become more frustrated sexually, less active sexually, and consequently it affects their marriage in an obvious way.

They then become, as the frustration builds up within them, more vulnerable to temptation, more frustrated in their own relationship maritally, and Satan is destroying the family by influencing people to speak profanity concerning sexual items and sexual parts and putting pornography before people. Families are dissolving. Couples are unhappy.

Whereas the Lord who designed sex, now don't forget He's the one who designed it, says this is the way it works best. You know, the Lord isn't shocked by sex, folks. He's not surprised at the joys or the passion

that's involved.

He designed it. He made it and He said, kids, this is the way it works best. If you want to experience the greatest satisfaction, the finest fulfillment, the most explosive emotion, follow my perfect pattern.

I made it for you. And here's the way it works. And that means walking rightly and wholly before the Lord and putting perverse things far away.

Father God knows what He's doing. Father knows best about such things. Satan.

Folks, listen. You know this, but let's be reminded of it once again. Satan never has a good day.

He never says, how can I bless this couple here at Applegate Fellowship? How can I just bless their marriage and their family? Never does he have a good day. Never does he back off. But he seeks to constantly erode your marriage.

Destroy your sexuality. How? One of the tools that he uses is profanity. There is power in the word that you speak and you speak profanely.

And it does not cause an erotic relationship in your marriage, but rather an eroded relationship in your marriage. It erodes and destroys. The family falls apart and Satan scores yet another victory.

So it debases. It not only debases the human body and sexuality and desensitizes people to eternity, but a third reason Satan is behind it is because it deflates the boldness to witness. If he gets you involved in using profanity, even occasionally, when you want to speak a word of witness to somebody about Jesus Christ, man, the enemy is going to be right there saying, how can you who just told that joke, how can you who just said that word in front of your co-workers, how can you talk about Jesus when you just said that and suddenly you feel that condemnation of Satan and your lips grow silent? You're just not going to be witnessing and sharing blessing if out of the same mouth moments or even days before came cursing or profanity.

So it deflates your witness. And not only just in your speaking, but guys, I really feel for you that work in situations where there's lots of profanity floating about constantly, the whole atmosphere just gets heavy. I mean, it just gets depressing.

Even if you're not participating or involved in it, what it does is, man, you just find yourself not wanting to say anything at all about godliness or rightness. And it can be tough. We'll talk about that in just a moment.

But profanity. So it desensitizes people to the reality of eternity. It debases human sexuality.

It depresses, discourages witness. And finally, it demotes character at the price of being popular. It demotes character.

Well, I've got to be profane occasionally, a guy will say. How can I fit in with the boys? And so you sacrifice your character to fit in with the boys, to be one of the good old boys. Guys, let me tell you the truth.

God did not call us to be good old boys. He called us to be godly men. There's enough good old boys out in Medford, Grants Pass, wherever.

Plenty of good old boys. We need some godly men. Some men who walk in rightness, integrity.

Who have a standard of holiness, even as they communicate verbally. Now, the source behind profanity. Crude, filthy, foul talk.

Cursings. The source behind it, Jesus said, more than yes or no comes from the evil one. And He's out to do it so that you will demote your character.

That you will depress your witness. Destroy your sensuality in marriage. Desensitize people to the reality of eternity.

It's a clever ploy by the enemy. Well, you say, wow. I found myself involved in profanity occasionally.

What do I do? What do I do from here, John? If the Word is saying that wisdom walks in such a way where no perverse thing is spoken, and if I'm desiring to be walking in wisdom, what do I do from here? Three things as we consider the solution for profanity. The solution for profanity. Number one, confess it as sin.

Confess it as sin. Admit that it's wrong. That's where it begins.

Don't justify it by saying, well, everybody's doing it. Don't rationalize it by saying, well, I've got it pretty much under control. But confess it as sin.

That's what Isaiah did. You see, you might be thinking, well, man, if I've been involved in profanity, does that mean that I'm totally wicked and debauched? No, not at all. It means there's a point in your life that needs to be adjusted.

Isaiah the prophet, a godly man, evidently had a problem with his speech. For in Isaiah 6, when Isaiah catches a vision of the Lord, he says, I saw the Lord high and lifted up, and I fell down and said, woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. He confessed he had a problem with the way he spoke.

And here's a prophet of God who had a problem with the language he used. And as he said, woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips. An angel came and took a burning hot coal off the altar that was before the Lord.

And he took that burning hot coal and he placed it upon Isaiah's lips, the place of Isaiah's problem. Did it burn him? Was he being burned by the Lord? No. He was being healed by the Lord.

For the flow of stench, the flow of evilness was cauterized at that point, sealed at that point. And he was touched by the Lord. So the flow of iniquity and evilness of his wrestling with was no longer coming forth.

Confess it as sin. That's where it starts. When you honestly, openly, candidly come before the Lord and say, it's wrong what I've been doing.

I don't like it, Lord. And it's against Your Word and it's from the pit. Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips.

Secondly, not only confess it as sin, but convert it to blessing. Convert it to blessing. Jesus in Matthew said, bless those who curse you.

When somebody curses you or uses profanity at you, or some situation is bugging you, don't curse it, bless it. A real man of God, a tremendous spiritual leader on our west coast, a strong dynamic leader, was driving in his car and he went to pick up a young brother, a young man who was relatively new to the

things of the Lord. And he picked him up and the two were going down the road in the car together when suddenly a car swerved out right in front of him.

Just obnoxiously, seemingly intentionally. And this man of God was about to say, can you believe that jerk? What's going on? About to utter that out. He could no sooner get it out though before the young man sitting next to him reached out his hand towards that car and said, Lord, we bless that driver in Jesus' name.

Lord, keep him from hurting himself. If he's drunk, Lord, show him the wrongness of that. Bless him, Lord, and strengthen him.

And suddenly this pastor slipped down in his seat and felt about that high. Because what he saw was a very real example of what Jesus said to do. Don't curse.

You see, he wasn't going to curse, but can you believe that jerk? That tone of voice was the same in a sense of uttering forth a curse. It was not godly. The young man turned that into blessing.

Bless. How much richer, how much better, how much solider, how much purer it is to start blessing instead of cursing. Convert it to a blessing.

Something bugs you. Something's not working right mechanically. Some person is bugging you personally.

Bless it or bless them in the name of Jesus. Convert the curse into a bless. So, first, confess it as sin.

Secondly, convert it to blessing. And thirdly, finally, confront it in love. You see, you might be in a situation where people are constantly cursing or being profane.

What can you do? Confront it in love. Not as a puritanical Pharisee. Not as a Victorian prude.

Not putting people down, but just allow the Lord to flow from you into blessing and life where there is cursing and death. Where there is pollution, offer praise. Before I knew I was going to speak on this particular subject, before I was sure about that, I was at the YMCA Friday afternoon.

It was 530. I had a wedding at 630. I stopped off.

Jumped in the sauna just to kind of get relaxed and refreshed a bit. And I sat there and that thing was cranked up. Man, it was hot.

It was cooking. And the steam just filled the room and suddenly a guy came up and opened the door from the outside and he was going to come in, and the steam just went out and hit him in the face. It's a steam bath, pardon me, not a sauna.

And the steam came out and just hit him in the face. And he went, Jesus! Jesus! And he said that. And immediately, I just said, name above all names, beautiful Savior.

And I sang a couple lines of that song and he looked at me and closed the door and went away. Now, I wasn't trying to be cute or clever or do something tricky. It was a reaction that I heard the name of my Lord being tossed around in a profane way.

And rather than allow that room to be polluted with that profanity, with that blasphemy, I had opportunity just to turn it right around and praise. And see, I am determined as much as I possibly can where there is pollution to turn it to praise. To confront it in love.

Not to say, you sinner, or you curser, or you blasphemous individual, but just, hey, if He has the freedom to blaspheme, I certainly can experience the liberty to worship. You see? You know, fair is fair. And rather than seeing that YMCA at that moment polluted by some source of blasphemy, I can honor and worship the name of Jesus.

Many, many times, I find people saying, Jesus Christ. And many times I just say, oh, isn't He good? Don't you just love Him? You know, when somebody says Jesus Christ, or God, you say, ha ha, praise His name. What's He showing you? You know? It takes a certain amount of guts to do that, but when you start doing it, it's real easy.

And people will really go, wow. Many times folks say to me, I didn't even realize I was saying God. I grew up that way.

It's been part of my vocab. Confront it in love. Offer praise where there is pollution.

Bless where there is cursing. Well, those are things that we can do in the plague of profanity that we are living in today. Confess it as sin if it's touched your life.

Convert it to blessing when you feel that temptation. Confront it in love when it's being tossed around in your presence. And in so doing, you'll be walking in wisdom.

Walking in the way that the Word of God says we should be behaving in this life. Wholeness. Rightness.

Solidness. Life. Purity.

Health. Those are things that are our possibilities to move in as we stay away from profanity. Instead, live in praise.

Good idea? What do you think? Let's pray. I wonder this morning if there's not many who would say, I need to take a moment right now, just me and the Lord, in the quietness of my own heart, and confess it as sin. I've indulged in profanity.

Not really realizing the source behind it or the effects of it. In the quietness of your heart, would you just right now, perhaps, do what Isaiah did and confess it to the Lord? Acknowledge it that it is sin? Father, many of us would say, like Isaiah, that woe is me, for we are a people of unclean lips. And we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

I would pray, Father, even now, by the power of Your Spirit, according to the precepts of Your Word, that You would allow a burning coal to come and touch our lips, that we might speak forth things that are right and true and not perverse and profane. Father, this world is so hurting. Hurling curses at one another.

Eroding the joys and possibilities of life and marriage and sex. Being seduced by Satan. Profaning and cursing that which should be a blessing.

And I pray that You would forgive us, Lord, as a society. We have erred greatly. We have become calloused.

We have tolerated filth going into our ears. Forgive us, Father. And even today, I pray that You would create within us a clean heart.

And Lord, give us a new sensitivity. A new boldness, Lord, to see the air cleared and the atmosphere changed. And help us to speak purely and rightly.

So, Lord, bless us now. Bless these, Your people. May this be a week in which they experience the joys of blessing.

And may they, Lord, be a positive influence in this community. Thank You for helping us. For straightening us out, Lord.

For correcting our walks. For Your blood which cleanses us from our many sins. We bless You and thank You, Jesus.

In Your name we pray, Amen.

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