

# Euphemisms: Dirty Talk in Disguise

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

## Introduction:

- A. "As societies grow decadent, the language grows decadent, too. Words are used to disguise, not to illuminate. Words are to confuse, so that at election time people will solemnly vote against their own interests." (Gore Vidal)
  - 1. "Euphemisms hide, erase, coat. Euphemisms lead us to tolerate the unacceptable; and, eventually, to forget evil." (Valeria Luiselli)
- B. Are slang words or euphemisms wrong?
  - 1. They are used in place of what is generally recognized as "bad words."
  - 2. They are mocked as the Shirley Temple of swearing.
  - 3. They are frequently used by Christians.
- C. There are three kinds of corrupt speech.
  - 1. Obscene - sexually related corrupt speech
  - 2. Profane - religiously related corrupt speech
  - 3. Vulgar - elimination related corrupt speech
  - 4. Eph. 4:29 - The Christian's speech is to be for edifying or building each other up. The Christian's speech is to serve as a blessing to those who hear it. Herein lies the standard for our speech patterns.
- D. There are three ways in which people use profane speech
  - 1. Uttering a curse upon something - Matt. 5:22
    - a. To curse another person or even to curse God's creation is a sin against God. God made the earth and people as a blessing.
  - 2. Using God's name in vain - Ex. 20:7
    - a. This principle is still true today. God does not want us to refer to Him in a vain or empty way. He is God and deserves our constant and complete respect. To use His name in an empty way is to not give God the respect He deserves.
  - 3. Utilizing something God made holy and making it common.
    - a. The sexual relationship is an example. God made that relationship to be set apart between husband and wife. If we speak concerning that relationship as if it is just another common or casual activity then we denigrate it. Far too many speak of it in a flippant and joking way.
    - b. Eph. 5:3-4
- E. So where do euphemisms fit in this doctrine? What are they?
  - 1. "Fib," "stretching the truth," do you understand it means a lie?
  - 2. "Affair," "fling," do you understand it means adultery?
  - 3. "Living together," "in a relationship" do you understand it means fornication?
  - 4. "Gay" do you understand it means homosexual?
  - 5. "The latest," do you understand it means gossip?
  - 6. "Risqué," do you understand it means immodest?
  - 7. "Off color," "colorful language" do you understand it means dirty jokes and cursing?
  - 8. "Had a little too much," do you understand it means drunk?

9. You know what euphemisms are, you know what they mean, and you know what the speaker intended with them.
  10. A euphemism is using a word that doesn't sound as bad as the one that most consider offensive, but the meaning of the word is the same. So there is no change in meaning when we use a euphemism.
- F. Suppose I approached someone sensitive about his loss of hair and said, "Man, are you getting bald." That would be rather offensive.
1. However, suppose I suggested the following, "You possess fewer follicle appendages on the cutaneous apex of your cranial structure, anterior to the sagittal suture and posterior to the lambdoidal suture, where said follicle appendages habitually germinate."
  2. That is a euphemism for going bald. The intent is less offensive, but the meaning is the same.
- G. So what do you mean when you use euphemisms?
1. Gosh, golly - God
  2. Jeez, gee - Jesus
  3. Crikey, crimeny - Christ
  4. Heck - hell
  5. Dang, darn - damn
  6. And so on... and these are just some of the ones for profane corrupt speech, to say nothing about the ones for vulgar and obscene speech
  7. No one says "What in Allah's name is going on?" No one texts "OMB" for "Oh My Buddha." You intend to say God.

## **I. GOD'S STANDARD FOR CHRISTIAN SPEECH**

- A. The standards of God much different than the world - Isa. 55:8-9
1. The world thinks lightly of profane speech calling it free speech.
  2. Jesus taught us to take all speech seriously - Matt. 12:36-37
  3. Speech is important, for it reveals the hearts of humans - Matt. 12:34-35
  4. Words manifest Christian conduct - Col. 3:8-10
- B. What standards do you have in speech?
1. Do you cringe when you hear the filthy language used on television?
  2. Would you be embarrassed to use those words in front of your grandmother or mother?
  3. How do you speak when you are not in church services?
- C. God despises a perverse mouth.
1. Prov. 4:24, 8:13, 15:28
  2. Christians control their speech - James 1:26
  3. So, you expressed your surprise or anger and used your American right to free speech. You edified no one, reduced your influence, hurt your listeners, put souls and risk, including your own. Feel better?

### **Conclusion:**

- A. "If there is one place we should begin, it is with a resolve to not conceal sins, to not seal ourselves off from people's suffering by burying it under a mountain of speech. Euphemisms are an attempt to find pleasant words for an ugly reality, and in doing so, they allow their users to avoid feeling guilty or uncomfortable." (Nathan Robinson)
- B. Col. 4:6