

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



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Your Speech Shows It

In the end, it doesn't matter what kind of claims we make about our faithfulness to God.

Our daily speech habits provide a far more accurate gauge of where our loyalties really lie.

“And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, ‘Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.’ Then he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak!’” (Mk. 14:70-71).

It was bad enough that Peter denied even knowing Jesus, only a few hours after boasting of his loyalty. But the real disappointment is the evidence he offered to disassociate himself from Jesus: “he began to curse and swear.” In other words, when he wanted to convince others that he was not a disciple of Christ, the surest way to do so was to let loose a string of profanity.

This was the same man who earlier had given a noble response to Jesus' question about His identity: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). Given the religious and political winds of the day, it took a lot of courage for Peter to make that confession. But it was all undone by a foolish lapse of judgment during Jesus' trial.

Surely, Peter didn't mean what he said about not knowing Jesus (his bitter

weeping upon hearing the cock crow is evidence of that). But whatever his state of heart, his use of profanity was hypocrisy, pure and simple. His prior claims of faithfulness were all negated by his use of vile language. Those who were questioning him were right—his speech showed that, at least at this moment, he was not a disciple of Jesus.

When we make a commitment to exalt Jesus as the Lord of our life, our tongue is included in the deal. Our speech must henceforth “always be with grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6; and notice, this is in a context of how we should behave “toward those who are outside,” v. 5). Our changed lifestyle must include putting away “filthiness, . . . foolish talking, . . . coarse jesting” (Eph. 5:4). James reduces the matter to a simple either/or equation: “Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so” (Jas. 3:10). We can act like an angel or talk like the devil, but we can't do both. Whatever our intentions, our speech sends a strong signal to others about our character.

So why do people have such a struggle with inappropriate language? There are a couple of reasons: For many, crude language is simply a long-standing habit, especially if they came from a rough background. Others use profanity for the same reason Peter used it: they want to fit in with the crowd around them, and tossing in the occasional swear word is an easy way to pay the club dues. Either way, we are not thinking about the message our speech is communicating to others — not the words themselves, but the *character* those words represent.

Jesus said, “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” (Matt. 12:36-37). If we have any fear at all of a final judgment, we should be very careful every time we open our mouths.

There are many sins we can commit with our tongue (anger, slander, gossip, boasting, etc.), but cursing is the least excusable of them all. What does *your* speech show?

– David King