

## Idle Words, Questionable Expressions

- I. God knows altogether every word we speak. **PSA 139:4.**
- II. Our speech is a window to the heart. **LUK 6:45.**
  - A. Our speech can *bewray* us (expose us). **MAT 26:73.**
  - B. We can gain reasonable insight into what is going on in another's heart by his speech. What is most in a man's heart (the abundance) is commonly known by his speech.
  - C. God doesn't need to wait to hear us speak to know our hearts. **HEB 4:12.**
  - D. Sometimes our own words may become the basis for our judgment. **LUK 19:22.**
- III. Jesus warned against *idle words* in **MAT 12:36-37.**
  - A. idle: Of actions, feelings, thoughts, words, etc.: Void of any real worth, usefulness, or significance; leading to no solid result; hence, ineffective, worthless, of no value, vain, frivolous, trifling. Also said of persons in respect of their actions, etc.
  - B. Is this a censure against all speech that is not noble, logical, constructive, etc.? Are you at fault for casual, light conversation or relating a clean pun or joke, etc.?
  - C. Consider that if something light or humorous was intended to produce a harmless response of mirth or laughter or lighten someone's mood, and such does so, then it cannot be said that the speech was void of any real worth or ineffective.
    1. If the speech did not promote sin or wound a conscience, where is the fault?
    2. There is a time to laugh. **ECC 3:4.**
    3. Mirth (pleasurable feeling, enjoyment, gratification, joy...) has its place. **NEH 8:12; ECC 8:14-15.**
    4. Sin took away mirth in Jerusalem but God promised an eventual restoration after punishment. **JER 7:34 c/w JER 33:10-11.**
    5. A merry heart improves one's overall bearing, provides a continual feast, and has healing power. **PRO 15:13, 15; 17:22.**
      - a. Humor is a means for coping with the troubles of life, understanding that life is far more than fun. Humor/mirth/laughter/jesting are *not convenient* (**EPH 5:4**) when substituted for repentance. **JAM 4:8-9.**
      - b. If we're honest, we would admit that, from the standpoint of emotional coping mechanisms for the grief of this world, humor beats anger, hatred, cursing, fretting, etc. But it should never replace prayer. **PHIL 4:6-7.**
    6. For a fuller treatment of this issue, review my study on Good Speech.
  - D. We are to shun profane and vain babblings. **1TI 6:20; 2TI 2:14-16.**
    1. babble: To repeat or utter with meaningless iteration; to speak foolishly or incoherently; to prate.
    2. prate: *intr.* To talk, to chatter: usually dyslogistic, implying speaking much or long to little purpose; formerly also to speak insolently, boastfully, or officiously; to tell tales, blab.
    3. Incessant and repetitive speech, particularly in criticism of others, is indicative of an insecure person who elevates himself by pushing others down rather than by genuine self-improvement (and it is a form of pride). **PRO 10:8; 3JO 1:10.**
  - E. Consider the context of **MAT 12:36-37.**
    1. The Pharisees had spoken blasphemously against the Holy Ghost. **MAT 12:22-32.**
    2. It was because of what THEY said that Jesus issued this pronouncement. c/w **MAR 3:30.**

3. “They might say, ‘It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?’ Jesus replies, ‘It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment.’” (Jamieson -Fausset-Brown Commentary)
  4. All hard speeches against God, not only blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, will be a matter of the final judgment. **JUDE 1:14-15.**
  5. All malicious or flippant speech against or about God is either outrightly sinful or on the edge of sinful. **EXO 20:7; LEV 19:12; COL 3:8.**
    - a. profane: v. *trans.* To treat (what is sacred) with irreverence, contempt, or disregard; to desecrate, violate.
    - b. blasphemy: Profane speaking of God or sacred things; impious irreverence.
    - c. It is observable that the most blasphemed name in history is Jesus Christ, the one name in Whom is salvation. **JAM 2:7; ACT 4:10-12.**
- F. If you have doubts or your conscience is troubled about any speech you have uttered,
1. Confess that to God to clear your account. **1JO 1:9.**
  2. Do not continue to violate conscience and pray/seek for wisdom and discernment to give your conscience clarity, rest and peace. Liberty is the partner of a clear conscience, not a wounded conscience. **ROM 14:22-23; JAM 1:25-26.**

### III. Consider some common expressions.

- A. “My goodness / Oh my goodness.”
1. goodness: The quality or condition of being good. 1. Of persons: Moral excellence, virtue. Occasionally in *pl.*: Good qualities.
  2. In unalloyed nature, only God is good. **MAR 10:18; ROM 7:18.**
  3. There is such a thing as a relatively *good man*. **LUK 6:45; 23:50; ACT 11:24.**
  4. Goodness is even attributed to men. **2CH 32:32; 35:26.**
  5. “My goodness / Oh my goodness” is an interjection used as an exclamatory phrase expressing surprise, excitement or even disgust. It is a euphemism, a minced oath for “My God” or “Oh my God.”
    - a. “My God” or “Oh my God” appear in sincere prayers in Scripture, not flippant expressions of surprise, excitement, disgust, etc. **1CH 17:25; 21:17; EZR 9:6; NEH 13:14; PSA 22:1-2 c/w MAT 27:46.**
    - b. Christ’s cry to God upon the cross is the only N.T. occurrence of the appeal, “My God...”
  6. The issues of taking God’s name in vain, or profaning His name, are considerations.
- B. “It’s not the end of the world.”
1. Cambridge Dictionary says this is an idiom meaning “not the worst thing that could happen.”
  2. In one sense, it actually is the end of the world. **1CO 10:11; HEB 9:26.**
  3. Believers should look forward to the end of this world since that ushers in a better one prepared for us by Jesus Christ. **2PE 3:10-14.**
  4. For a believer, the worst thing that could happen is that the Lord would forsake them, and that will never happen. **HEB 13:5-6 c/w MAT 28:19-20.**