



What About Profanity? by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

Question: What does the Bible say about "profanity?" I wonder if it's all right because I seem to hear it everywhere.

Answer:

When "profanity" has become profane, surely people should notice. Profanity is not just a word or two, but an ungodly and irreverent attitude toward God and His word. Profane words and other sins come from the heart, and all persons will be judged by what they have said and done. Jesus said,

"Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man" (**Matthew 15:17-20**)

Then He named sins including: "evil thoughts... false witness, blasphemies". Since it is "out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (**Luke 6:43-45**), then all who use profanity are profane within their hearts! If not, why not? Tree fruit shows tree root.

Some may reply, "I don't really mean it." Then Jesus said,

'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' (**Matthew 12:36-37**).

Some may retort, "I'm not a Christian, so it doesn't count," but the Bible showed under Moses' law, an example of a boy brought up in a religiously mixed home who "blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed" during a fight, but was to be put to death (**Leviticus 24:10-16**). It mattered not whether one was a visitor or a native-born Israelite,

One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you (**Numbers 15:16; Exodus 12:49**).

The New Testament does not demand the death of blasphemers, but the words of Jesus will judge all people, whether they believer or not (**John 3:18-21; 12:48; 2 Corinthians 5:10**).

BIBLE CONCEPT OF PROFANITY

Profanity is that which "brings down, makes common or easily trodden that which is sacred or holy." The Hebrew Old Testament expression translated by "profane" meant to "bore out, render hollow," and its Greek New Testament counterpart meant to

"treat as common, like a doorsill." Any attitude, word or practice is thusly condemned that reduces or strips holy meaning from God and His word, or that elevates the common to the level of sacred. The language in which it is spoken, or the exact words used, may vary from country to country; therefore it is the profane attitude, and not quibbling over which word(s) are profane, that is the concern of Scripture.

Since "hell" is God's appointed place for the Devil and his angels (**Matthew 25:41**), and "damnation" is God's appointed condition for sinners (**Mark 16:16**), then it profanes these to use them freely and with no purpose in conversation! Christian will heed **Ephesians 5:3-6**:

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness [anything base, defiled, embarrassing], nor foolish talking [stupid, senseless, not intended to edify, idle], nor coarse jesting [double entendre, dirty jokes, turning good words into bad (i.e., "Jesus Christ" into "Jesus Christ!", "gay" into homosexual, "churches of Christ" into denominations/ sects, etc.)], which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Hilarity from Hell cannot be good.

Profaning God's Word is the prelude to all sin. The Devil's first effort was aimed at getting Eve to view God's condemnation as meaning less than "you shall surely die" (**Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6**). When that law was reduced [profaned, jtpII] in her heart, she sinned. Esau "despised his birthright" by bargaining it away for a bowl of soup in youthful folly and learned later it was irretrievable (**Genesis 25:29-34; 27:32-38**). Centuries afterward, he still was regarded by God as representing the "profane person" (**Hebrews 12:16-17**). Lightly regarding a holy matter, or desecrating the "holy," is profanity, and it is done, not only in word and works, but in worship, as well.

Profanity is difficult to overcome. Peter had closely followed Jesus for three years, but when he denied knowing Jesus to save his own skin, he reverted to fisherman's language, and "began to curse [call down the direst of evils] and swear [affirm, promise, threaten]" (**Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71**). When Peter had no truth to his statements nor Word of God on his side, he did what so many others do - he used worldly words to numb his own conscience from its pangs (**Hebrews 4:12-13**). Profanity is the "drug" of men whose consciences are being seared (**1 Timothy 4:1-2**).

BONFIRE OF THE PROFANITIES

God's name in vain. Many think God's first name is "O my" or His last name is "damn" but in either form, its frequent use as exclamation without respect, is profanity. God had said to "not take the name of the Lord in vain" [without proper respect, jtpII] (**Exodus 20:7**). Moses wrote,

If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (**Numbers 30:2**).

God commanded Israel that if oaths invoked His name, they should be solemnly made with full intent to fulfill (**Deuteronomy 10:20**; **Jeremiah 12:16**). It is not wrong, therefore, to say "God is my witness" if indeed He is (**Romans 1:9**; **Philippians 1:8**)! "Men swear by the greater" to settle disputes (**Hebrews 6:16**), but God swore by Himself because there is no one greater (**Hebrews 6:13-14**). Many people swear upon a Bible they refuse to obey, and in the name of God Whom they refuse to revere. These oaths are profanity. The "carnally minded" person refuses to be "subject to the law of God" (**Romans 8:6-8**), so why think the disobedient and ungodly will abide by their oath(s). (Cf. **1 Timothy 1:8-11**)? "A stack of Bibles a mile high" or continual swearing mean nothing to the profane person -- or to God (**Matthew 15:7-9**)!

Some think swearing by all else but God is acceptable, but Jesus said,

"I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatsoever is more than these is from the evil one" (**Matthew 5:34-37**).

It is as wrong to falsely swear by what God owns as to swear by Him.

Reverence for God corrects profanity. God (Hebrew, *Elohim*) created heavens and earth from nothing (**Genesis 1:1**; **Hebrews 11:3**), and should be always respected as "the Power" who "gives to all life, breath, and all things" (**Acts 17:25**). Israelites were told,

The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome (**Deuteronomy 10:17**)

But they profaned His Ways time and again. Evil Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar was forced to confess this (**Daniel 2:47**), the apostle Paul repeated it (**1 Timothy 6:15-16**), and Jesus wears the title (**Revelation 19:11-16**). Every idol profanes God by making His creation equal or above Him in the eyes of its worshippers (**Romans 1:18-25**). Evolution is an idol, and so is "covetousness" (**Colossians 3:5**), and other idols of the heart (**Ezekiel 14:3**).

God's worship in vain.

What God has cleansed you must not call common (**Acts 10:15**).

God has never wavered from that principle throughout the Bible. God specified the incense in Jewish worship was "most holy" and not to be compounded for use by anyone for any reason other than in the tabernacle (**Exodus 30:34-38**). Nothing else was to be offered on the incense altar (**Exodus 30:8-9**). Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, offered:

... Profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (**Leviticus 10:1-2**).

Possibly because of drunkenness, they had failed to "distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (**Leviticus 10:9-10**). This is a lost lesson to those "drunk" with worldly ways who make no distinction in:

- God and mythological deities or idols;
- Jesus Christ and any other "prophet" (e.g., Buddha, Mohammed, Einstein, Joseph Smith, Edgar Cayce, et.al.);
- Jesus Christ and any other "church head" (Roman pope, Greek metropolitan, etc.);
- Bible and any other "scripture" (e.g., Koran, Rig Vedas, Calvinism, Book of Mormon, Marxís Manifesto, Evolution, et. al.);
- Baptism for remission of sins and baptism to "join a church;"
- Baptism/ immersion and "sprinkling or pouring;"
- Congregational singing and "mechanical musical entertainment;"
- And on and on ad infinitum.

People are so used to their profanity of God's worship, they are insulted when we call them back to the Bible.

What God calls unholy must not be called holy. This profanity is called "blasphemy." Jews who regarded Jesus as only a man mistakenly thought it blasphemy for Him to call Himself "God" (**John 10:33**). However, one truly blasphemous phrase "Harlot-wood" has popularized in movies for more than twenty years is "holy s**t!" Under Moses' law, God had Israelites bury their excrement "outside the camp" and with "an implement" they were to:

Dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp [and] therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you (**Deuteronomy 23:12-14**).

Paul considered his unconverted life as "rubbish" [excrement, wash water, garbage] now that he was in Christ (**Philippians 3:8**). To call "holy" that which God has never sanctioned or sanctified for His use is blasphemous profanity! It can be forgiven but only by repentance (**Matthew 12:31-32; 2 Peter 3:9**).

People have spoken of New York's "Ground Zero" and the "heroes of 9/11" with the reverence I wish they would use for God and His sacred things.

--- John T Polk II

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