

Cussing Christians & Falling From Grace and Rising Again

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(External quotes in [Blue](#), words of Jesus in [Red](#))

Today we'll be covering a topic that is shrouded in a fair amount of confusion. And that is the use of profanity or other unbecoming speech by Christians, and how that relates to their witness for Christ. I'll be addressing a number of passages and in effect we'll be bouncing around the Bible. We'll also be covering becoming and unbecoming conduct in the Christian community, and how to approach bringing about correction to a brother or sister. There are number of expletives that will be used in an explanatory manner to illustrate various points.

Verse Bank (Language and Unbecoming Conduct & Speech, Restoration and Forgiveness, and Disciplinary Action)

Numbers 30:1-2

Judges 11

Proverbs 4:24, 6:12-15, 24:1-2, 19:1

Luke 3, 13:31-32

1 Corinthians 10:23

Ephesians 4:29, 5:4, 4:1-3

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15

2 Timothy 2:14-19, 3:14-17

1 Peter 2:1-3

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

1 Samuel 2:3, 20:30

Matthew 3, 5:21-22, 12:33-37, 18:15-17, 23:16-22

Romans 6, 14, 16:17-18

Galatians 6:1

Colossians 3:5-10, 3:12-17

1 Timothy 5:19-20

James 5:12

1 John 3:18

We'll be knocking through these passages individually, and addressing their themes section by section & case by case. So please bear with a fair amount of bouncing back and forth between the Old and New Testaments and a possible repeat of a passage or two as different parts of it are examined. Unless otherwise stated, the Bible translation I'll be pulling from is the ESV. So, what does the Bible have to say about our speech and conduct?

Our Speech

[Proverbs 4:24](#) "Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you."

In this instance "crooked speech" is in reference to that which is "deceitful" or that which would distort the truth or defraud another (Strong's H6143).

[Proverbs 6:12-15](#) "**12** A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, **13** winks with his eyes, signals [scrapes] with his feet, points with his finger, **14** with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord; **15** therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing."

In this instance also “crooked speech” is in reference to that which is “deceitful” or that which would distort the truth or defraud another. It’s clear in this passage that “crooked speech” in conjunction with winking and signaling with the feet, is intended to swindle another out of their money, possessions, and or land. A great theatrical example of this is in the opening scene of the movie Lock Stock And Two Smoking Barrels. In the scene, two of our leading characters are conning people into buying bunk jewelry from a little street stand they’ve setup. One man plays the confidence man selling the jewelry, and the other man plays the shill who can’t believe what a great deal he’s being offered while acting as though he’s never met the former guy and whipping the crowd into a buying frenzy.

Proverbs 19:1 “Better is a poor person who walks in his integrity than one who is crooked in speech and is a fool.”

Original Hebrew translation has the word “perverse” in place of “crooked”, and directly denotes “a man of fraudulent speech” or one who is “perverse in lips” (Strong's H6141).

1 Samuel 2:3 “Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”

This passage is a fairly straightforward warning against proud and arrogant talk, as it is unbecoming to a Christian, and can cast an ugly shadow on our witness.

Ephesians 4:29-32 “**29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

In this instance the Septuagint has “unwholesome word” in place of “corrupting talk”. This definitely denotes speech that is unbecoming for a Christian to utter. The passage goes on to qualify “unwholesome word” in verse 31, and seems to indicate speech that is bitter, wrathful, sinfully angry, clamorous/needlessly noisy, or slanderous. Other unwholesome talk could definitely be defined as talk that is not “seasoned with salt”, is “crude”, or “causes your brother to stumble”.

Ephesians 5:4 “Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.”

In this instance “filthiness” denotes that which is “shameful or obscene” (Strong's G151). The Septuagint has “coarse jesting” in place of “crude joking”, and refers to facetiousness/sarcasm or jokes that are in bad sense/taste, or lowbrow/gutter humor. E.G. joking crudely about sex/sexual matters, meanspirited joking at another’s expense, or being an arrogant sarcastic jerk. Speaking crudely of another is covered by this passage as well, even if what is said is not exactly an insult. In effect, saying something like “man that chick has a fine ass,” or

commenting similarly about the wife or husband of another. Filthiness of speech and crude joking are most definitely not becoming to a Christian, and should not be engaged in.

Ephesians 4:1-3 "**1** I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2** with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3** eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Absolutely we want to walk in a manner befitting a Christian. We want to, as we are often under a microscope and scrutinized a bit harsher than an individual that doesn't claim to be beholden to a specific belief-system or moral code given by a deity. We also don't want to act in a manner that takes the LORD's name in vain, and betrays the whiteness for Him that our lives should exhibit. Taking the Lord's name in vain is not saying his name or title flippantly i.e. "oh my God" or "sweet Jesus." As ambassadors of God, we stand and serve as representatives to the World for Him. If we cast aspersions onto God and the sound teachings of the Bible because of our contradictory behavior in acting like a pack of godless morons, then we have failed as ambassadors. And that is taking God's name in vain. For this reason we want to walk in a manner of wholesome speech and conduct.

Colossians 3:5-10 "**5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Much like Ephesians 4:31, this passage indicates that we want to put away from us any action or speech that is sinfully angry, wrathful, malicious, slanderous, obscene, or untruthful. We don't want to engage in behavior and speech of this nature, as we don't want to lead a brother astray or assassinate our witness for God to someone who is ignorant of the Christian walk and all that comes with it. We also have to have grace for ourselves just as God does (Romans 6) and recognize that we are going to screw up from time to time and sin. The important thing is to recognize it, right our step quickly, learn from our blunder, and do better next time.

2 Timothy 2:14-19 "**14** Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. **15** Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. **16** But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, **17** and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, **18** who have swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. They are upsetting the faith of some. **19** But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

In this instance, the Septuagint tells us "not to wrangle about words" instead of "not to quarrel about words". In both instances this verse is telling us not to grapple/content with each other over empty and trifling matters, and not to argue about unimportant things that are of no

real use. Essentially quit acting like a bunch of jackwagon adolescents griping on the playground about crap that really doesn't matter that much to us and has very little bearing on our future lives. The next verse is an admonition to behave gracefully as a Christian should. "Irreverent babble" in this passage is in reference to speech that contradicts the scripture/gospel and in its fallaciousness leads people away from the truth. Lastly the passage commands us to depart from iniquity which is willful devotion to something abnormal, crooked, twisted, and or perverse. As Christians we must do our absolute best to avoid willfully engaging in sin and that which contradicts the word and could lead another astray.

1 Peter 2:1-3 "**1** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. **2** Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— **3** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good."

In this passage we are told to put away all desire to cause pain, injury, or distress of another (malice), false impressions (deceit), behavior that contradicts what one claims to believe or feel (hypocrisy), painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage (envy), and the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation (slander).

James 5:12 "But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation."

During the time James wrote, many Jewish people made distinction between "binding oaths" and "non-binding oaths". When an oath included the name of God, it was considered a binding-oath. And when an oath did not include the name of God, it was considered a non-binding oath. To swear an oath in this fashion was akin to crossing your fingers behind your back. It is these non-binding oaths that James is condemning in this passage.

On the topic of swearing, the Enduring Word commentary has this to say -

- i. The Bible does not forbid the swearing of all oaths, only against the swearing of deceptive, unwise, or flippant oaths. On occasion God Himself swears oaths (such as in Luke 1:73, Hebrews 3:11, and Hebrews 6:13).
- ii. "All swearing is not forbidden, any more than Matthew 5:34; (for oaths are made use of by holy men in both the Old and New Testament, Genesis 21:23, 24; 24:3; 26:28; 1 Kings 17:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 1:20; and the use of an oath is permitted and approved of by God himself, Psalm 15:4; Hebrews 6:16) but such oaths are false, rash, vain, without just cause, or customary and frequent in ordinary discourse." (Poole)

b. Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath: James again echoed the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:34-37). The need to swear or make oaths, beyond a simple and clear yes or no betrays the weakness of one's word. It demonstrates that there is not enough weight in one's own character to confirm their words.

c. **Lest you fall into judgment:** This lack of character will be exposed at the judgment seat of Christ. This motivates us all the more to prepare for that judgment by our speaking with integrity.

- i. This admonition may seem out of context to us. Yet, “Probably James jotted it down as an after-thought, to emphasize the warning of James 5:9; in excitement or irritation there was a temptation to curse and swear violently and profanely.” (Moffatt)

The importance of not swearing flippant oaths cannot be understated. God’s position on making vows/swearing oaths is given in Numbers 30 & Deuteronomy 23.

Numbers 30:1-2 “**1** Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, saying, “This is what the Lord has commanded. **2** If a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 “**21** If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. **22** But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. **23** You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.”

Broken vows are a big deal to God, and we are held to what we say. Paul tells us in Romans 14:11-12 “**11** for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” **12** So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

Jesus sets the Pharisees back on their heels with a sobering volley of truth-bombs in Matthew 12:33-37 **A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit** “**33** “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. **34** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. **35** The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. **36** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, **37** for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

For my Jordan B. Peterson fans out there, it behooves one’s self to speak with precision. Say what you mean and mean what you say. A most pertinent Old Testament story to nail this coffin shut comes by way of the story of Jephtha’s Tragic Vow in Judges 11. In Judges 11 the Israelite people of Gilead are being oppressed and attacked by the Ammonites, and they come hat in hand to this wicked awesome warrior named Jephtha, begging him to vanquish the Ammonite threat for them. Only thing is that Jephtha was the son of a whore that his father Gilead was sluttin’ around with, and had been run out of town by his brothers who were born from Gilead’s actual wife. Jephtha is understandably none too impressed when the Gileadite

elders come requesting aid, but he ultimately agrees to lead their army in exchange for being made ruler of the Gileadites. Jephtha's tragic vow comes into play in Judges 11:29-40.

Judges 11:29-40 “**29** Then the Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh and passed on to Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed on to the Ammonites. **30** And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, **31** then whatever [or whoever] comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it [or him] up for a burnt offering.” **32** So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand. **33** And he struck them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a great blow. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

34 Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. **35** And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow.” **36** And she said to him, “My father, you have opened your mouth to the Lord; do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.” **37** So she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions.” **38** So he said, “Go.” Then he sent her away for two months, and she departed, she and her companions, and wept for her virginity on the mountains. **39** And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made. She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel **40** that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

Now that sucks. Harsh though the outcome was, the vow that Jephtha made was completely voluntary and unnecessary, as verse 29 points out that “the Spirit of the Lord was upon” him. God himself was already going to ensure Jephtha's victory, as it was God who had raised Jephtha up for this appointed time. Whether Jephtha was putting on a show or just boorishly posturing by making his vow is unclear. He keeps to his unnecessary promise that he was now held to by God himself, and offers his daughter unto the Lord. Heavy stuff I know. Now before we all go clutching out pearls over the broken vows, promises, and oaths in our own lives, let's take a pause and remember that under the new covenant that Jesus forged with God on our behalf, that amazing grace exists for us. The book of Romans tells us that for those of us who have received salvation, we are free from the fetters of sin and have been saved by grace. We obviously don't want to continue on in sin. A supremely comforting thing to remember is that on our best day, God delights in us. And on our worst day, God accepts us. If there are broken vows in your life, then I encourage you to give those to God as He is faithful and just to forgive us. We'll still mess up from time to time, but let's always strive to do better and be better.

Swearing & Cursing

Swearing in the sense that most English-speaking people would equate to “cussing” or

“cursing”, is not the same thing as defined by the Bible. People often lump swearing, cursing, cussing, and using foul or vulgar language together. They are not all the same.

SWEARING (as we learned) is the actual act of swearing an oath or a promise to another. Either by God or not by God (e.g. on one’s self or an object).

CURSING is the act of speaking a curse either with willful precision (Noah over Ham - Genesis 9:25, Joshua over Jericho - Joshua 6:26, Jesus over a fig tree - Matthew 21:18-19), or speaking a curse flippantly and typically in anger (damn you, damn this thing, God dammit, God damn you, God damn this thing). Cursing or cussing is not simply saying four-letter words. An intent must be weighted behind the curse that denotes who or what is being cursed, and to what extent who or what is being cursed. We as humans attribute varying degrees of severity and intensity to words for everything from descriptions of heat (warm, hot, blazing, scorching), descriptions of cleanliness (cluttered, messy, filthy), to the perceived foulness of words (dink, dork, shmuck, dick or cock). In the case of the afore mentioned phallic words, each one means exactly the same thing, only we typically agree that three of them are dirty and two of them are not. In this instance personal preference and social conventions play heavily into one’s use or nonuse of particular words. For instance a former pastor of a church I attended thought the word “balls” in reference to “testicles” was somehow dirty. Vulgarity while being a very real thing, also becomes something of a matter of personal preference in some respects. E.G. my cousin Sonia telling me not to swear when I said “darn it” during a card game. The act of darning a sock is mending a hole with interlacing stitches. However people also equate the word darn or darned with damn or damned. I see nothing wrong with the word darn, but someone else may find it horribly offensive. Cursing is also not forbidden in the Bible, given the right set of circumstances. It however is never to be done flippantly.

Vulgar Language of the Day

Let’s take a look of some language of the day that was considered profane or vulgar to people in Biblical times.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:21-22 “**21** You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother [without cause] will be liable to judgment; whoever insults (Greek has Raca – equates to “good-for-nothing,” “O empty one,” or “thou worthless” (as a term of abuse or utter vilification)) his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

In modern times we often think very little of the weight behind calling a person a good-for-nothing, or worthless. However in Biblical times, we see in this passage Jesus himself pointing out that expressing such contempt for a brother or sister’s intelligence could result in having to face the council and their judgment for your cruel remarks. We also see in Biblical times that to show contempt for a brother or sister’s character by calling them a fool, stained your soul so indelibly that it was liable to land you in hell. Calling someone a fool in ancient Israel was akin to calling someone a goddam retard today.

In Jesus' harsh address to the Scribes & Pharisees in Matthew 23:16-22 he says "**16** Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' **17** You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? **18** And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' **19** You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? **20** So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. **21** And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. **22** And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Jesus uses the exact same word "fool" in verse 17 of this passage that he points out in Matthew 5 would land a person's soul in the unyielding eternal inferno called hell. Is Jesus being hypocritical or acting sinfully here? Not at all, as Jesus lived a life completely free of sin. Instead, Jesus is justifiably giving a bunch of uptight blockheads an overdue dressing down and showing just how important context and intent are when it comes to speaking maliciously vs speaking correctively.

Let's take a look at an Old Testament example of some profanity of the day. When Jonathan foils a plot by his father, King Saul, to kill his best friend David, Saul gets downright pissed and flies completely off the handle at Jonathan.

1 Samuel 20:30 "30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"

While eloquently and fervently put, calling someone the "son of a perverse, rebellious woman" in Biblical times was akin to calling someone a son of a bitch or a son of a whore in today's day and age. We don't think twice about using the word perverse to describe a child molester. We also don't think twice about using the word rebellious in reference to an obstinate and defiant child.

Back in the New Testament things got a bit spicy during Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. Luke 13:31-32 "**31** At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." **32** And he said to them, "**Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.'**"

Calling back to Matthew 12, (the chapter that keeps on giving) - Jesus put some heat and volume behind his words when he chastised the Pharisees and likened them to venomous snakes for attributing his miracles to Satan in Matthew 12:33-37 "**33** Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. **34** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. **35** The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. **36** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, **37** for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

John the Baptist called the Pharisees and Sadducees vipers as well in Matthew 3 & Luke 3. A fitting assessment as their reprehensible behavior earned them the serpentine moniker. And John the Baptist was reckoned the greatest person “among those born of women” by the J-Man himself in Matthew 11:11.

The Apostle Paul who was utterly blameless under Mosaic law, counted his righteousness and all the accolades and praise he received for his piousness as rubbish when compared to being made righteous through faith. In Philippians 3:7-11 Paul writes “**7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— **10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.”

The Greek word for rubbish (Strong's G4657) is skybalon (skü'-bä-lon) - dung or the excrement of animals. Through the lens of modern day language Paul is literally calling his righteousness under Mosaic law bullshit, compared to “that which comes through faith in Christ.”

Again the Apostle Paul gets good and crispy while addressing the church in Galatia about their freedom and justification in Christ. He illustrates in no uncertain terms just what those who were preaching a contrary doctrine and causing unrest among the brethren oughta do. Galatians 5:7-12 “**7** You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? **8** This persuasion is not from him who calls you. **9** A little leaven leavens the whole lump. **10** I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. **11** But if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. **12** I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!”

The context is most important here, and Paul is in the right as he inadvertently rebukes the ne're-do-wells among the church in Galatia by expressing his wish that rather than sowing seeds of discord, that they would instead hack off their nad-satchels. So what's the takeaway from all this? As a Christian you should feel free to just start dropping F-Bombs and giving insufferable people the finger? Do Paul's, John the Baptist's, or Jesus' justifiable and righteous outbursts against the Pharisees and Sadducees mean that we need to aggressively rail against people in every confrontation or issue we find ourselves in? No, of course not. Paul puts it well in 1 Corinthians 10:23 (NASB) “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.” As previously mentioned, context and intent matters in everything we say and do. Concerning the things we say, beyond instructing us to put away malice from our speech, not to lie, speak deceitfully, or perversely, and not to commit the unforgivable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, the Bible doesn't have a list of No-No words that we are to abstain from. What many believers think is in the Bible concerning our speech and “cussing”, simply isn't there. One thing the Bible does urge us to be constantly aware of and careful to maintain however, is our witness for God to our brethren and unbelievers. In a world

where more often than not, perception is reality, we need to read the room as it were and be aware of the optics.

Beware the Optics

In Paul's Epistles he talks a lot about our witness for God and how we don't want to be the cause of a brother's stumbling into sin, either by the actions we take or the words we say.

Romans 14:20-23 "**20** Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. **21** It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. **22** The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. **23** But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin."

1 Corinthians 10:23-32 **Do All to the Glory of God** "**23** "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. **24** Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. **25** Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. **26** For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." **27** If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. **28** But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice (to an idol)," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— **29** I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? **30** If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. **32** Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, **33** just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved."

These passages are very clear that Christians should not eat, drink, or act in any way that would cause another to stumble and fall into sin. These passages also speak of your private walk with God, and the faith held therein being between you and your creator. The entire chapter of Romans 14 is very clear that for one an act might not be sinful, but for another an act might be sinful. There is a bit of individual subjectivity to the issue. We of course (and especially those of us who are leaders or role models) do not want to act in any manner that would cause another to stumble. However the act of abstaining from a particular action is done as a catering to one who is "weak in faith" (Romans 14:1-4). It makes sense that one must walk a tighter line in the sight of those with weaker faith, so that they learn through observance, a method of acceptable and graceful Christian behavior. Only further understanding and comprehension of God and his word on the part of the individual who is "weak in faith" will put to rest qualms over opinion and personal preference on specific issues like this. Relating this to language, in Romans 14:14 Paul tells us that "nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean." The use of language (however innocuous to us) can grieve a brother/sister depending on how it's used, or if that brother/sister is of a lesser understanding or is weaker in faith. E.G. if we use non "foul" language to gossip badly about another in the presence of others who will rightly take offense. We can also grieve another if we jokingly say a word or phrase that we have no issue

with, or unknowingly bring up a subject matter that is uncouth to them. In that instant it becomes incumbent on the one who is grieved to point out to the one who did the grieving, the error of his/her ways (if they are indeed in error) or exactly what was said that offended/put off the grieved individual. It may very well be that the one doing the grieving is absolutely in the wrong, or the one who is grieved needs to wise up and develop a tougher skin, or the whole thing could be a complete misunderstanding, only to be put right by honest dialogue between the griever and the grieved.

Call on me Brother

Colossians 3:12-17 "**12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

This passage calls us to be sympathetically conscious of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it (compassionate), to be of a sympathetic or helpful nature (kindness), to be free from pride or arrogance (humility), to endure injury or slander with patience and without resentment (meekness), to be steadfast toward each other despite opposition, difficulty, or adversity (patience), to support and uphold one another through adversity (bearing), and to cease to feel resentment against each other for transgressions committed (forgiving). The passage also tells us to teach and to express warning or disapproval to each other (admonishing) in all good sense and sound judgement (wisdom). It's clear from these verses that we are called to hold each other accountable, building each other up. We are also called to bear with one another as we grow in our Christian walk, teaching and being taught in the ways of Jesus.

Matthew 18:15-17 "**15** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **16** But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17** If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

This passage gives us a model for admonishing, reconciliation, and in severe cases when correction is not heeded, excommunication. Steps to take when a brother/sister sins against us:

Step 1 – Go to the person one on one and bring the grievance to his/her attention. We do this in hopes that the griever will see the error of their ways and right their step, thereby coming into reconciliation with the one grieved.

Step 2 – If the person in the wrong/griever does not listen to the admonition of their brother, then the one bringing correction is to gather one or two witnesses of the sin in question and reproach the brother who is in the wrong.

Step 3 - If the griever does not heed the admonitions of the grieved and their witnesses, then the issue is to be brought before the church. This is effectively the offering of a third opportunity for reconciliation. We could liken this to an intervention by friends and family.

Step 4 – If the griever still remains stiff-necked not listening to the church, then they are to be excommunicated and disassociated with from that point on.

What Jesus makes very clear for us in Matthew 18 is that there is an order to pointing out the dust mote in another's eye, and that a chance for atonement and reconciliation must be offered. One is not to go straight to the top of the church's proverbial food chain with our issue in leu of going to a brother first.

Romans 16:17-18 "**17** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **18** For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive."

This passage is a warning to be ever vigilant to weed out those who would cause division in the church by slinging irreverent babble that contradicts the scripture and leads others astray. We are told to watch out for and avoid them. It's important to note that excommunicating someone is done as a last resort, and only after attempts have been made to bring about correction. If the person in question persists in blatant defiance, then you must take action.

Galatians 6:1 "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

This passage is pretty straightforward. It again tells us that we are called to restore each other when we fall into sin. We also need to be careful not to get caught up in the same sinful behavior that has been brought to light. Pornography is an big area of stumbling for a lot of men and some women. Don't give it an inch.

Proverbs 24:1-2 "**1** Be not envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them, **2** for their hearts devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble."

This passage is a pretty straightforward warning to not take up with wretched people who don't have our best interests at heart, and would lead us astray. It is clear that the "evil people" in this passage are not counted among the fold of the righteous. And more often than not, we are very likely to pick up the habits and practices of those we regularly associate with. Choose your friends and confidants carefully and wisely.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 "**13** As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. **14** If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. **15** Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."

This passage explains that should we not obey the instruction in thanksgiving, the Judgment at Christ's Coming, instruction against lawlessness, praying for the disciples, and warning against idleness, that we are to be disassociated with to bring shame and also warned as a brother.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 "**19** Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. **20** As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."

This passage points out the need for and inherent benefit of approaching a person found in the wrong, with witnesses. This is done to bring about reconciliation. Again if the person persists in their sin, then they are to be rebuked in front of the whole church to serve as a fearful warning to the rest of the congregation. It's for love of the Christian family that this is to be done. Love is understanding, but it's also brave enough to tell a brother or sister to stop mucking around.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 "**14** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

This passage shows the benefit of scripture and how it is to be used to equip each other for every good work. Knowledge of the scriptures is imperative, and a simple admonition of "it's Biblical" to someone we believe to be in error will not suffice where specific correction and instruction are needed. One must essentially make their case competently. In this way we can grow from the reproof vs simply getting a dressing down and being left to wallow in it.

In the above six passages it is clear that second chances are to be granted, as well as opportunities for reconciliation to those who would seize them. As God is a God of second chances, so should we be.

Taking all that we've covered into consideration, we want to be mindful of the words of John in 1 John 3:18 "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth." Talk is cheap, and John points out that we are not to love each other with cheap talk, but to show our love through actions and truth. According to the Bible there aren't "cuss" words that we need to abstain from. It is our motivations and intent that matter most. So use the words that you want to use. However, don't do so just for the sake of being crude or lude. Do as instructed in Proverbs 4:23 by keeping "your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." Act with wisdom and be aware of those who are around you. Read the room, decide if the people you are with are mature enough in their Christian walk to not have an existential crisis when you refer to your butt as an ass. As fun as it may be, we don't need to lean on crudeness or vulgarity when we're cracking jokes. I can for sure do better in that category ;) Do your best to continually be aware of your witness for God and recognize that you're not always going to bat 1000 in the speech department. Have grace for yourself just as God does, and don't beat yourself up. If you

do happen to find yourself hitting the bumpers of the lane you're rolling down, then take a pause, remember who you are and who you serve, line up your sights, and take the next shot.

God bless you, and have a great day!

Sources & Resources

Bible Translations: ESV, NASB

Strong's Exhaustive Bible Concordance

Enduring Word. (2018). James 5 Commentary. By David Guzik. Retrieved September 4, 2020 from <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/james-5/>

Dictionary Definitions

deceitful adjective de·ceit·ful | \ di-'sēt-fəl \ (Webster's Dictionary)

Definition of **deceitful**

: having a tendency or disposition to deceive or give false impressions:

a : not honest

// a deceitful child

// left her deceitful husband

b : DECEPTIVE, MISLEADING

// deceitful advertising

devious adjective de·vi·ous | \ 'dē-vē-əs , -vyəs \ (Webster's Dictionary)

Definition of **devious**

1 a : WANDERING, ROUNDABOUT

// a devious path

b : moving without a fixed course : ERRANT

// devious breezes

2 : OUT-OF-THE-WAY, REMOTE

// upon devious coasts

3 a : deviating from a right, accepted, or common course

// devious conduct

b : not straightforward : CUNNING

// a devious politician

also : DECEPTIVE

// a devious trick

// a devious plot

corrupt verb cor·rupt | \ kə-'rəpt \ (Webster's Dictionary)

corrupted; corrupting; corrupts

Definition of corrupt (Entry 1 of 2)

transitive verb

- 1 a : to change from good to bad in morals, manners, or actions
// Officials were corrupted by greed.
// was accused of corrupting the youth
also : BRIBE

b : to degrade with unsound principles or moral values
// Some fear the merger will corrupt the competitive marketplace.
- 2 : ROT, SPOIL
// The fruits were transported without being corrupted.
- 3 : to subject (a person) to corruption of blood
- 4 : to alter from the original or correct form or version
// The file was corrupted.

intransitive verb

- 1 a : to become tainted or rotten
// leaving the bodies to corrupt on the field

b : to become morally debased
- 2 : to cause disintegration or ruin

corrupt adjective

Definition of **corrupt** (Entry 2 of 2)

- 1 a : morally denigrate and perverted : DEPRAVED

b : characterized by improper conduct (such as bribery or the selling of favors)
// corrupt judges
- 2 : PUTRD, TAINTED
- 3 : adulterated or debased by change from an original or correct condition
// a corrupt version of the text

malice noun mal·ice | \ 'ma-ləs \ (Webster's Dictionary)

Definition of **malice**

- 1 : desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another
// an attack motivated by pure malice
- 2 : intent to commit an unlawful act or cause harm without legal justification or excuse
// ruined her reputation and did it with malice

swear verb \ 'swer \ (Webster's Dictionary)

swore \ 'swôr \ ; **sworn** \ 'swörn \ ; **swearing**

Definition of swear (Entry 1 of 2)

transitive verb

- 1 : to utter or take solemnly (an oath)

- 2 a : to assert as true or promise under oath
// a sworn affidavit
// swore to uphold the Constitution

- b : to assert or promise emphatically or earnestly
// swore he'd study harder next time

- 3 a : to put to an oath : administer an oath to

- b : to bind by an oath
// swore them to secrecy

- 4 obsolete : to invoke the name of (a sacred being) in an oath

- 5 : to bring into a specified state by swearing
// swore his life away

intransitive verb

- 2 : to take an oath

- 3 : to use profane or obscene language : CURSE

swear by

: to place great confidence in
// swears by his mechanic

swear for

: to give assurance for : GUARANTEE

swear off

: to vow to abstain from : RENOUNCE
// swear off smoking

swear noun

Definition of swear (Entry 2 of 2)

: OATH, SWEAR WORD

Strong's Concordance Definitions

Strong's H6143 **deceitful** – עִקְשׁוּת (Transliteration = `iqqěshuwth)

I. distortion, crookedness

Strong's H3891 **devious** – לָזוּחַ (Transliteration = ləzuwth)

- I. deviation, perversity, crookedness

Strong' H7843 **corrupt** – שָׁחַת (Transliteration = shachath)

- I. to destroy, corrupt, go to ruin, decay
 - A. (Niphal) to be marred, be spoiled, be corrupted, be corrupt, be injured, be ruined, be rotted
 - B. (Piel)
 - i. to spoil, ruin
 - ii. to pervert, corrupt, deal corruptly (morally)
 - C. (Hiphil)
 - i. to spoil, ruin, destroy
 - ii. to pervert, corrupt (morally)
 - iii. destroyer (participle)
 - D. (Hophal) spoiled, ruined (participle)

Strong's G2549 **malice** - κακία (Transliteration = kakia)

- I. malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure
- II. wickedness, depravity
 - A. wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws
- III. evil, trouble

Strong's H7650 **swear** - שָׁבַע (Transliteration = shaba')

- I. to swear, adjure
 - A. (Qal) sworn (participle)
 - B. (Niphal)
 - i. to swear, take an oath
 - ii. to swear (of Jehovah by Himself)
 - iii. to curse
 - C. (Hiphil)
 - i. to cause to take an oath
 - ii. to adjure (1 - to command solemnly under or as if under oath or penalty of a curse; 2 - to urge or advise earnestly)

Strong's G4550 **unwholesome** - σαπρός (Transliteration = sapos)

- I. rotten, putrefied
- II. corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out
- III. of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless

Strong's G4657 **dung** - σκύβαλον (Transliteration = skybalon)

- I. any refuse, as the excrement of animals, offscourings, rubbish, dregs
 - A. of things worthless and detestable