Bad Words!

My dad was not a Christian until he was 79 years old. One of the greatest days of my life was baptizing him into Christ the day after Thanksgiving. Dad was a great guy in many ways and was one of the most helpful and most forgiving men you could ever meet. He just wasn't a Christian until late in life. He lived eleven more years and learned that God's word truly is amazing.

I mention my dad for a specific reason: he hated "bad words." Bad words were not allowed in our home, not from the kids and not from adults, lest one draw Dad's scorn! Little did he know at the time that our heavenly Father also hates "bad words." God inspired Paul to write a wonderful letter to His church in Ephesus. The Christians there were new converts and needed a lot of spiritual guidance for daily living. In Chapter 4, particularly, Paul gives some instructions that seem so basic it's almost embarrassing to realize they need to hear them.

Among these basics in Ephesians 4 are things like, be patient, be gentle, be tolerant, don't behave like non-Christians, don't be ignorant, don't be callous, don't be greedy, don't lie, don't stay angry, don't steal, and, listen carefully to verse 29, ***"Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."*** "Unwholesome words" (Greek *sapros*) means literally words that are corrupt, foul, rotten or decayed. It can mean words that are damaging and hurtful. Notice that godly language is that which builds up others and give grace to those who hear.

Remember that "grace" means undeserved favor or unearned kindness. In other words, we are to speak words which are better than people deserve. Our words are to build up people more than they deserve. Our speech should be an example of what others are to speak, building them up more than their words or actions warrant.

Yet in our daily lives, and certainly in much of America's daily electronic entertainment, we hear just the opposite - bad words and lots of them! As for God's people, we know that no such rottenness should come out of anyone's mouth (see also James 3:8-12).

Let's connect John 13:34, 35 to Ephesians 4 and James 3… they will know we are Christians by our love and they will recognize our love by our language!

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