



## The Power of Words

Does it bleeping matter if you cuss?



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But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, **and your words**, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives ye must perish. And now, O man, remember and perish not.

*Mosiah 4:30*

When I moved away to college, I went from the sheltered bubble of my life at home to the callous world of the co-ed dormitory. Talk about a shock. Boys and girls alike — at school, foul language surrounded me.

Have you noticed what's going on around us? It's become more and more acceptable to swear and curse. It's used in society as an exclamation point, and it's no longer considered obscene or scandalous to hear cursing in television shows, movies, radio broadcasts, or even when walking through a store. Jokes are funnier; people sound cooler; stories seem more intense.

### **You Kiss Your Mother With That Mouth?**

I had let a few slide in the presence of friends, and I felt the sharp pang of guilt in both my heart and mind. I felt that instant shame you feel. It hurts your heart, and you know you are sorry.

I began working out justifications, as those of us who are baptized do whenever we want to minimize the guilt we feel when the Holy Ghost inside us is leading us to the knowledge of right and wrong.

"What is in a word, anyway?"

"Really, why is cursing so bad?"

"It's just a form of expression."

In my mind, I wrestled with the

logic...if God created all things, including language, and He has dominion over everything, what power can a word have? Fundamentally, a word is a list of letters verbally spoken. How can it have power over my heart when it's just a sound? I wrestled with this internal question a few times and meditated on the issue.

### The Dream

Then one night I had a dream. In my dream, I was in complete darkness. There was no light and there was no sound. In no part of this dream could I see anything, but I knew everything that was taking place. I knew my "body" wasn't there, but it was me. I was being restrained by my arms and at my feet. As I was being wrestled down, I tried to scream. I tried with everything I had, but nothing came out. No sound. Then a deep wail of a single curse word came out of what would be the heart or chest straight upwards. It was such a powerful

moan, deep from the soul. It wasn't from the mouth. It was more of a feeling released.

When I awoke, I was not afraid, but I had instant clarity of what I experienced. It was not a scary dream of being damned to hell for cursing. It was showing me where these words belong and where they come from. It allowed me to feel this word's weight from the heart without a single sound.

If a word comes from a thought, and bad words come from bad places, and beautiful words come from good places, then we can categorize foul language easily. Scripture says in many instances that we are judged by the words we say (Matt. 12:36-37). More than simply regurgitating a rap song or a dirty joke, words have intent. We can use our words for good or bad.

### Let God Lead Your Lips

2 Nephi 32:2-4 says, "Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost

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ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost? Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because you ask not, neither do ye knock wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark."

I share this experience only to give a testimony of how good God is for answering prayer and to tell you how much better your heart will feel when it is not weighed down with bad language. When you don't understand or you want further evidence, pray to God and He will reward your questions with answers and lead and direct you. He will lead you in the best way because He loves you.

More than just being an example, we should seek to speak, do, and think like Christ. God wants good and beautiful things for us. He leads and directs us to beautiful blessings and better lives. When the Holy Ghost inside of you guides you in a direction, follow it for it is good.

## Speak Life or Speak Death

**Proverbs 18:21** says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruits." In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson translates it this way, "Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose."

Is it possible for words to convey the message of everlasting life? Can the words you speak when you give your testimony potentially lead to someone else's soul salvation?

In what ways can using foul language discredit your testimony in the eyes of others? Consult **James 3:10** and **1:26**.

Is cursing more than just speaking words that our society has arbitrarily deemed offensive? Read **Luke 6:45**, and think about the moral underpinnings, the heart's impulse.