

## WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULDN'T CUSS

In 2005 the American Film Institute voted that the best movie line of all time was the one that Clarke Gable deftly delivered as the character Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*. If you endured all four hours of melodrama you'll certainly recall his parting dismissal of Scarlett O'Hara's whiny interrogative, "Where shall I go, what shall I do?" Rhett rewardingly utters the words on the mind of every male viewer who is still awake, served with the cool and immortal preamble: "Frankly, my dear ..."

The Motion Picture Association's production code was fortuitously amended a mere month prior to the film's release and for the first time it allowed the use of borderline curse words under this condition: "if it shall be essential and required for portrayal, in proper historical context, of any scene or dialogue based upon historical fact ...or a quotation from a literary work, provided that no such use shall be permitted which is intrinsically objectionable or offends good taste."

The determining standard of what is "intrinsically objectionable or offends good taste" has proven quite the moveable feast. Words that were respectable vernacular in the Elizabethan era would get a kid's mouth washed out with soap today, and diction that would never escape the censor's "intrinsically objectionable" razor as recently as 1939 are now heard on every silver screen in the Western world, and even occasionally on the news (at least in Anchorage).

While as Christians we acknowledge that God's standards of holiness are immovable a thinking linguist must acknowledge that what different cultures and periods consider to be taboo

is a perplexing field of study.

It's hard to use examples without stepping into a cow paddy of intrinsic objections. But one instance I am confident no monolingual American would find offensive is the Afrikaans cuss words "bliksem" and "donder". These are two words South African pastors are permitted to use neither in the pulpit nor in private. Both words "offend good taste" and commonly precipitate the taste of soap for a South African child. Exactly what Afrikaaners find offensive about the words is a brow-furrowing enigma. Biksem and donder are the words for—I kid you not—lightning and thunder, respectively. When deployed in a meteorological context they are perfectly acceptable and often used with impunity on the nightly news. But when either word is used as an expression of surprise (my bliksem), anger ("jou klein bliksem"—literally "you little lightning"), or threat (as in "Ek gaan jou donder"—literally "I'm going to thunder you"), the result is a disapproving tut-tut from polite society. If ladies are present during the thunderous outburst it is expected that the foul mouthed offender apologizes for the strong language.

I was asked recently "Where in the Bible does it say Christians shouldn't cuss?"

Well, it doesn't. There is no list of words Christians of all cultures and every epoch are required to memorize for the sake of exorcising from our collective vocabulary. But the Bible is replete with instructions to exercise restraint of our tongues.

The truth is that a particular word has no inherent sinfulness beyond that which a culture or community assigns to it, nor can it be intrinsically objectionable. Every short-term missionary has an anecdote of a faux pas where they used language that crossed a line only when it crossed the border. But connotations that contravene our sensi-

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF GUARDRAILS

by Steve Kroeker

Our obsession with technology and so-called progress has contributed to a faulty view of the course of history. The dominate narrative of our generation seems to be that we, as a race, are making great progress. History is a straight line, always moving forward, always going to exciting new places we have never been before. This view of the world leads the Christian to feel that we are facing unheard of new challenges, that to be a faithful Christian in the 21st century is entirely unlike the challenges faced by the centuries of Christians who have gone before.

Instead of straight line progress, history is cyclical. There's nothing new under the sun. What's old is new again. Yes, there are new technologies and medical advances, which both help the common good and bring new moral dilemmas. But the human condition remains the same. The morality of the first century and the twenty first century are not dissimilar.

### Sintertainment

Sunday's Grammys drew the usual

buzz and chatter. It seems to me that while the Oscars are still a celebration of art in filmmaking, the Grammys are a contest in vulgarity. It's not about the music anymore. Sintertainment is the word Doug Wilson used, and I think that captures it.

But more than just an overindulgent show, the Grammys (and its cousins), go a step further and set itself up as Judge and Jury over culture. The performers are not Artists, but the arbiters of what is good and honorable and acceptable in western culture. They aren't evaluating talent but determining new morals. They decide what is acceptable and unacceptable in North American culture. The Grammys are an announcement of the new accepted norms. Everyone fall in line.

### Playing Our Part

But this is not a new story. It feels new, but rest assured we're watching a re-run. This a rather tired plot line, one we've seen played out a thousand times before. It's compelling at the time, but it always ends the same way. The culture-shapers set out the new moral rules to play by and demand everyone fall in line. Pressure is applied to fit in and play the game. The weapons of mockery and derision are wielded fiercely.

We have a part to play in this old story. The heroes of our faith have been playing it well in every re-run. We're called to play the part of righteous Noah being mocked by his immoral culture. I'm sure Noah's "tolerant" neighbour had a lot more friends than he did. We're called to play the part of Joseph in Egypt, running from temptation and getting punished for purity. We're called to play the part of Peter, when the crowds had scattered and many disciples had abandoned Jesus because of his hard words. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life..."

When all around us turns to sintertainment and the worship and celebration of all that God forbids, we are called to a godly defiance. To stand against the current. To be a godly voice of protest. To be uncool. Sometimes culture needs to be embraced, sometimes engaged, and sometimes defied. While there is much in our culture that we can embrace and redeem, at certain points the only appropriate response is stand against it. To be counter-culture.

### Those Who Have Gone Before

Like mold growing in the dark,

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## The ARISE Vision

2 Timothy 2:22

“Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

God and the Gospel is preached

Ongoing Discipleship

Serving in the church

Parent partnerships

Equipping youth to know, love, and worship God

Loving the world in practical ways

## The ARISE Purpose

- We want youth to know, love and worship Jesus in full authenticity.
- Connections are important to youth and we want to build relationships.
- Communication is key in understanding one another and helping one another.
- Community is what every youth seeks and we work to provide a safe place.
- Commission has youth will be challenged to reach outside the walls.
- We value parents and seek to build partnerships with them.

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bilities are real and require wisdom to discern.

This is why Christians don't cuss: we cherish the purpose for which God gave words.

Ephesians 4:29 “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.”

Colossians 4:6 “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

We also appreciate words as a barometer of what lurks deep in a person's heart. James 3:8-11 “but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?”

Christians understand that an inability or unwillingness to take control of our language shows a paucity of self-control or lack of graciousness toward others. Swearing shows that you are unconcerned about that which Christians ought to be concerned: edification, grace, humility, patience, self-control, evangelistic witness, example to children, integrity, and many other virtues that we extol. These are undermined by the use of language that offends or lumps us in with others who offend.

Our words put us in cahoots with others who use those words indiscriminately. A guy at my gym swears like a sailor, as do his companions. But when he heard a pastor drop a curse word, he considered that solecism to be a justification for a slew of other infractions: “You see, when a Christian hits his thumb he cusses just like I do. He's obviously harboring stuff inside that he doesn't show unless his guard is down.”

In the end language is to be used for what glorifies God. A handy rule may be that if you aren't prepared to use a particular word in your prayer to God then you shouldn't be using it in your conversations with others.

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this view of history as progress has grown in part due to our vast ignorance of church history and the heroes of the faith who have gone before. The more a person reads and learns of the struggles and faithfulness of Christians who have gone before, the more hope one has for our own day.

My great heroes of the faith are those who did the unpopular, the different, the dangerous. With much fear and trembling, they displayed a godly defiance in the face of the pressure of their culture.

I think of Dietrich Bonhoeffer defying the Nazi's program of indoctrinating the church with their evil agenda. I think of William Wilberforce devoting his whole life to protesting and fighting against slavery. History stands on his side, but at the time of his birth nobody was saying that slavery was wrong. He was mocked, threatened, and ostracized for his life-long devotion to the most socially unpopular cause of his day. I think of Martin Luther standing before the emperor, refusing to recant his teaching, willing to die on a matter of exegesis. Initially the whole world stood against him. This doesn't even scratch the surface. In every century, God has called his people to stand against the culture at certain points. Godly men and women embraced Christ and despised popularity. And we remember them and honor them for it.

These men and women were mocked, despised, ridiculed and even killed for standing against the crowd. They would not be bullied by popular opinion. Their views were not shaped by the shapers of pop culture but held firm convictions built on God's word.

So as our culture celebrates all the creative new ways they have found to engage in old sins, we are called to continue to faithfully be God's people, which at times calls for a godly defiance of sin.

# January



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			2	3	4	5
6	7 Young Adults 7-9pm	8 Arise 7-9pm Guard Rails #1	9 Jolt 6:30-8pm	10	11	12
13 Mini Jolt 1st Service	14 Young Adults 7-9pm	15 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm Guard Rails #2	16 Jolt 6:30-8pm	17	18 Fishy Friday 7:00pm - 10:00pm Jolt and Arise FREE	19 
20 Mini Jolt 1st Service  Youth Leadership Team Meeting 1st Service	21 Young Adults 7-9pm	22 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm Guard Rails #3	23 Jolt 6:30-8pm	24	25 ARISE EVENT Escape Rooms Surrey 6:30pm-10:00pm \$25.00	26
27 Mini Jolt 1st Service	28 Young Adults 7-9pm	29 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm SOAK RICO	30 Jolt 6:30-8pm	31		



# February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Missions Extravaganza Serve At Church 5:15pm to 9:00pm FREE	2 
3 Mini Jolt 1st Service  Adult Leadership Team Meeting 2nd Service	4 Young Adults 7-9pm	5 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm Affinity Series 1	6 Jolt 6:30-8pm	7	8 	9 Church Annual Celebration Dishwashers and Helpers 6pm to 9pm FREE
10 Mini Jolt 1st Service  Youth Leadership Team Meeting 1st Service	11 Young Adults 7-9pm	12 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm Affinity Series 2	13 Jolt 6:30-8pm	14	15 Fishy Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Jolt and Arise FREE	16 
17 NO MINI JOLT	18 Family Day Holiday	19 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm Affinity Series 3	20 Jolt 6:30-8pm	21	22 ARISE Amazing Race 7:00-10:00pm \$5.00	23
24 Mini Jolt 1st Service  Discipleship Group Celebration Lunch 1pm	25 Leadership Dinner Leaders Only 6pm to 8:30pm	26 Homework Drop In 3-7pm Arise 7-9pm SOAK RICO	27 Jolt 6:30-8pm	28		