

Every Dirty Word Known to Man

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I was recently filling my gas tank when I heard a loud blaring noise coming from the car ahead of me at the station. I usually pay no attention to the “stuff,” as I have no interest in it; but this time I noticed the presence of all kinds of foul language. As I listened more intently, not to enjoy but to learn, I probably heard nearly every dirty word that I had ever heard coming from the song. I have lived a sheltered life from this standpoint and my list of such words might be quite short compared to some lists. I know precious little about the modern-music scene, but I think the song was a rap song, from what I have heard about that kind. The scary part of the situation was that the two young girls in the car were obviously unashamed of the sound their radio/stereo was sending forth, as one of them paraded in her skin-tight clothes and talked to a carload of males who drove up. I suppose this is the modern scene, more than some of us are willing to admit it.

I am concerned for our country (Prov. 14:34). I wonder about the parents of the girls (Eph. 6:4; 5:3-4). I am afraid for those young girls. I seriously considered speaking to them about the profanity they were advertising, but they left before I finished. What should I say to people in such a situation? As I think about this matter and discuss it with you, possibly I will cause some others to speak up in similar situations.

I believe we should start with the ***spiritual nature of the human being*** (Gen. 1:26; Zech. 12:1). As God has created us in His image and endowed us with a nature like His own, we are primarily accountable to Him (Rom. 14:12). To assert our right to do as we like and to answer to none for our choices is to deny the hand of God in our creation and the voice of God in the Scriptures. To disregard our likeness to the Lord is to undermine our dignity, worth, and potential for good; to deny the voice of God speaking to our good is to leave ourselves alone on the sea of life, without chart or compass or guiding star when we reject His. It is no wonder that so many become aimless, resorting to drugs, promiscuous sex, fame, or some other source to fill the void that only God can fill (Eccl. 3:11).

I think also we should stress the ***formation of habits*** — both good and bad — results from the repeated thoughts and acts that we allow a place in our minds. Habits then form character. I remember the following short poem:

*“Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”*

(Quoted by Samuel Smiles in *Life and Labor*, 1887.) In many cases we have failed to instill in our young people, the relationship of what they think about and practice to the entirety

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of life. No one can expect to live a life dominated by good when he has chosen the bad of this world for his thoughts, speech, and behavior.

Personal responsibility and accountability to others is another lesson that I believe we must somehow get across to young people. The recognition of this depends on the understanding of our spiritual nature, as stressed earlier, and our need for each other. Influence and example must become concerns of all responsible people; what we do affects others. Teaching is the sole foundation for such a concern. We have it on the best authority that evil companionships have a corrupting influence on all, even on the best of us (1 Cor. 15:33). It is also true that the influence of a child of God can serve as salt and light (Mt. 5:13-16). Are you using your speech to edify others (Col. 4:6)?

I am satisfied also that we must imbed in the thinking of our youth that a ***misspent life is not easily re-called or amended***. I do not suggest that repentance is impossible or that sin is inevitable in its rule over us, for neither idea is correct (Acts 17:30; Rom. 6:12). Some turned to God from idols, and what a turn that was, given the associated vices of idolatry (1 Thes. 1:9). It is more the difficulty of breaking bad habits and rooting out the evil that has become second-nature to us that I here emphasize. Patterns of speech and conduct can be changed, but to change them requires major and prolonged effort, beginning with a change of one's environment (friends). It is far better for a young person to determine to avoid the life of indecency that is becoming altogether too common among those too young to understand the bitter fruit of sin. It is undeniably true, however, that when we grow our roots in the field of sin, the fruit that we harvest cannot be expected in some other field (Gal. 6:7-8).

Each of us can use whatever influence he has for good in helping to salvage one or more such young person. Though that one might not have become a Christian, in such a case it is still possible to save a soul from death and to cover multitude of sins (Jas. 5:19-20). I am afraid for our young people, as I said before; but with all of us working on this problem, the situation will not be as scary.