

BY HEART

When Scripture becomes second nature

James 3:7-18 | Page 1

Intersection of Sanctity of life and Learning the faith by heart



Longer version: nicgibson.substack.com

Sanctity of Life

Normal Topics:
Abortion and/or Racism

Abortion toll:
73 million annually
2,780,000,000 in last 38 years

Sanctity of Life

Normal Topics:
Abortion and/or Racism

Possible Topics:

Pornography, euthanasia, disability, poverty, injustice, violence, Integrity in authority, immigration, support of order keepers, children in cobalt mines, drug deaths, mental health epidemic, drug use normalization, education crisis, freedom of speech, divorce...

That's just scratching the surface.

Sanctity of Life

Eroding the foundation:

Profanity & Vulgarity

Profanity and vulgarity are becoming increasingly common, as are other sins of speech, and coarsening ways we are talking to each other- even as we have more ways to speak more publicly.

This is more and more common among Christians, and Christian ministers, influencers, and pastors.

Counter intuitive: Reasons for P&V

1. Courtesy- among people it puts at ease
2. Profession of strength- signal non-fragility
3. Not afraid of dirt- clean hands are no virtue in a fight
4. Escalation- you're not listening
5. Rebellion against false morality
6. Emotional expression- they're emotion words
7. Stigmatization- describing the profane and the vulgar

There are important reasons people use P&V. We don't need to be judgy. We need to be clear.

Jesus demands that we support human dignity by the way we speak.

We are called to speak graciously, truthfully, and to build others up.

We must not inadvisedly use profanity and vulgarity

This will help us speak more consequentially and constructively

1. We must restrain profanity and vulgarity and speak graciously to build others up.

6 quick reasons:

1. Weightiness- (Ex 20:7) don't use the Lord's name vainly, and don't give false testimony.
2. Reverence- "Hallowed be your name"- (Matt 6:9) my greatest hope is that God's name is revered.
3. Contrasting Example: Lady wisdom and folly- how they talk is a key difference between them.
4. Self-control vs. self-deception- James 1:26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but [instead] deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless (Jas. 1:26 ESV).
5. Contradiction- James 3- you can't have it both ways- to honor God and curse men. The fruit of real faith is godliness- in what we speak.
6. Self-revelation- What you say reflects your heart- Lk. 6:44-45 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit...For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

What sort of things we talkin'?

1. Vain reference to weighty things- vanity, scoffing, flippancy
2. Swearing and cursing or as an oath (without need)
3. Quarreling and Grumbling (2 Timothy 2:14, James 5:9)
4. Contempt in judgment and personal insult (Matthew 5:21-24)

These are all pretty obvious extensions of the Golden Rule:
“Do to others as you would be done by.”

But what about more general Profanity and Vulgarity? What if I don't care if people use it- does that mean it's fine?

Profanity and Vulgarity

Ephesians 4:29

“Do not let **any unwholesome talk** come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Profanity and Vulgarity

Ephesians 5:3-5

“But among your sexual immorality, or **any impurity**, or covetousness- none of these **should even be named among** you, **as is fitting** to saints, Nor should there be **obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking**, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

Filthy or dirty

Foolish or stupid

Coarse or crude

Profanity and Vulgarity

Colossians 3:8-10

“But now **you must rid yourselves** of all such things as these: **anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language** from your lips. **Do not lie** to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Ok, the Bible says it. But why does it?

2. We must see profanity and vulgarity as an erosion of dignity and denial of wisdom.

Premise 1: your speech matters

Proverbs 18:21

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.”

Proverbs 25:15

“With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.”

Premise 1: your speech matters

James 3:3-8

“When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

Premise 2: we need the lost virtues

Profanity is an action that denies the sacred status of its object or undermines the reverential affection something or someone deserves.

Vulgarity is any action that denies or neglects the dictates of wisdom or undermines the ordinary affection wisdom deserves.

Profanity and vulgarity will naturally increase and seem more justifiable as we forget their corresponding virtues.

Profanity

Irreverent, without regard for the dignity or sacredness of a thing.

Vanity

Scoffing, dismissiveness

Flippancy

Humiliates sincerity, earnestness, sacredness, reverence.

Reverence

Esteem, honor

To esteem something for its sacredness, worth or inherent dignity.

Reverence values immaterial and non-consumable attributes in something.

Vulgarity

Foolish, unrefined, ungoverned

Not in line with the dictates of wisdom.

Classical: unrefined by cultivation and philosophy (stoics)

Biblical: not taught by wisdom, folly, short sighted, morally oblivious, inattentive to consequences.

“common foolishness”

Prudence

Wisdom, excellence, governed

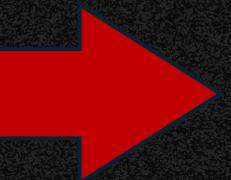
Desires to apply wisdom appropriately having been refined by growth, correction and instruction.

Attentive to responsibility, righteousness, foresight, impact on others, and the consequences broad and long term.

“refined wisdom”

Foolishness and remoteness

Concentrated benefit,
disbursed costs



Tragedy of the Commons



Small, remote, but cumulative

Foolishness and remoteness

Vulgar and Profane people/s don't recognize and won't accept the problems they create by erosion and accumulation



Won't act till it's too late

Blame something else that's "nearer"

Too late to reverse course

The perpetrators arrive as repairmen

(true from boyfriends to governments)

Foundations determine possibility



Liberty- we can make our own decision

Trust- you won't hurt me if I don't control you

Manners- we put each other at ease

Loyalty- what's done matters still

Prudence- we act wisely for the long term

Reverence – we honor the same things

The long game

Corrosive

Vulgarity and Profanity are corrosive to human sanctity and dignity. They erode the foundations of our personal and social strength through the incredible power of our speech.

Constructive

Reverence and Prudence are the foundations of establishing human sanctity and dignity. They build the foundations of nobility and liberty. They express wisdom and honor, through the power of our words.

3. Speak graciously, constructively, and powerfully

Graciously and Constructively

Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but **only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.**

Powerfully

Acts 8:19-23 “[Simon]... offered them money and said, ‘Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ Peter answered: ‘May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.’”

Powerfully

Our words are more powerful and consequential when we reject profanity and vulgarity- when we chose our words carefully and speak with confidence and self-control.

We can become more adamant, more powerful, more consequential – and more focused. Our words will be more penetrating, apt, and likely to persuade.

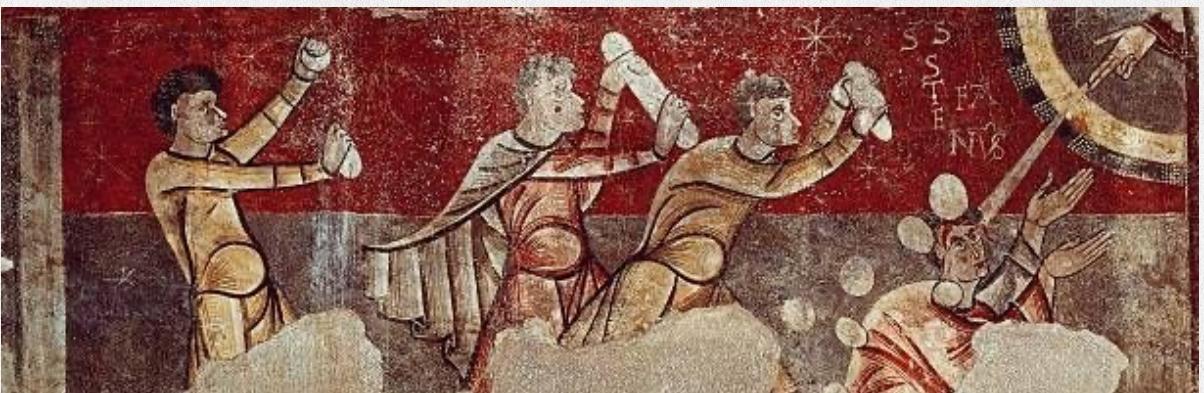
Stoning of Stephen



Acts 7:51-53

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him-- you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

Stoning of Stephen



Acts 7:59

“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’”

sh man
s blew
-27 "He
old one.
neskins.
l be ruined.
threw 9:17
his seed.
e and ate
ang up quickly,
re scorched,
, which grew
duced a crop
he answer d,
h them. Let
rvevers: First
wheat and bring
the kingdom of
ld. Though it is
garden plants
nches." - Matthe
It is
worke
asure

house
gainst th
them this parable: "No one tears a piece
otherwise, they will have torn the new garmen
l not match the old." - Luke 5:36 "Neither do peo
neskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine wil
l be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins
Matthew 9:17 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out t
scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds
and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, whehe it did not have much soil.
ang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plant
re scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell amon
, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, when
duced a crop -a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." - Matthew 13: 3-
10. he answer d, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the whea
h them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell th
rvevers: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather
wheat and bring it into my barn.' " - Matthew 13: 24-30 He told them another parable
the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in hi
ld. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the larges
garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in i
nches." - Matthew 13:31 - 32 Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of G

oman took and mixed into about sixty p
lough." - Luke 13:20-21 "The king
man found it, he hid it ag

the st
grea
of a r
id the
pour new
un out and
nd both are
A farmer went out t
the path, and the birds
the sun came up, the plant
the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plant
they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell amon
which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, when
duced a crop -a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." - Matthew 13: 3-
10. he answer d, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the whea
h them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell th
rvevers: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather
wheat and bring it into my barn.' " - Matthew 13: 24-30 He told them another parable
the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in hi
ld. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the larges
garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in i
nches." - Matthew 13:31 - 32 Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of G

oman took and mixed into about sixty p
lough." - Luke 13:20-21 "The king
man found it, he hid it ag

BY HEART