

## Teaching Teens That Words Matter

June 2007



**"Whether from a best friend, favorite celebrity, Don Imus, or even from the U.S. Senate floor, teens are learning that once taboo four-letter words and derogatory statements can be used at any time and at any place."**

It seems like the world just doesn't care how perverse language has become. Profanity and put-downs have become the normal language of many teenagers, including some Christian teens. A survey of public high school students found that more than 75 percent reported hearing so-called adult language frequently in the halls and cafeteria (boston.com). Whether from a best friend, favorite celebrity, Don Imus, or even from the U.S. Senate floor, teens are learning that once taboo four-letter words and derogatory statements can be used at any time and at any place. Some parents have even become more lax in dealing with cussing. Thoughts may cross their minds such as, "Cussing and language are the least of my worries. I've got bigger issues to worry about than that." If you have this attitude, remember that little "worries" will eventually become big ones if not dealt with properly. As you begin talking to your teen about his or her speech, here are some areas on which to focus. Cussing does not equal "cool." In fact, profanity gives off the perception of being unintelligent, unimaginative, and just status quo. Help your teen understand there is a link between cussing and moods. Foul language is hostile, and using it actually can increase angry feelings. In turn, feeling angry makes swearing more prone to happen again, and the vicious cycle continues. Help your teen find alternative words to express emotions. Remember, a scrambled version of a four letter word is not an option, so pick a nicer word that might help change their mood more quickly. Ultimately, parents must set the example by what is said, watched, and listened to. Finally, the most important thing that can be done is prayer. Pray your teen will have a pure heart as well as a pure tongue.

### Greetings Parents

Well here we are in the summer months. It is heating up out there. Hopeful you are finding ways to stay cool, whether that is in doors, in a pool, or in some other state on a vacation. We are in the season when the motto for parking your car is "find the shade". You know what I mean. Getting into a vehicle during this time of year is equal to touching a hot stove. OUCH!!! So hopefully the air conditioning is working and you are able to escape the 110+ degree weather.

On to the important things, right?

June has been a successful month. We have finished our series on worship and have posted all the teachings on our website @ [www.vcfphoenix.com](http://www.vcfphoenix.com). Click on the youth ministry page and you will find our youth ministry resources.

We have a great bunch of kids in our group. They are beginning to connect with one another on a greater level and seem to be enjoying our time together every Sunday morning.

You might have noticed that our youth have been gathering in the back during worship. Our purpose for that is to establish and nurture a cohesiveness within our group.



## Pulse

**Here are some interesting points to ponder regarding language.**

**Are you more or less likely to buy products from companies that use profanity (or joke around with it) in their commercial campaigns?**

5% - Much more. It shows that they're edgy and cool.

4% - More. It shows they're innovative.

38% - Less. It shows only that they're crude and rude.

54% - Much Less. In fact, I'd avoid them altogether.

(pluggedinonline.com)



**Adults were asked: How often do you personally use swear words in conversation?**

16% - Several times a day

10% - Once a day

21% - A few times a week

12% - A few times a month

8% - About once a month

12% - A few times a year

21% - Never

(Associated Press-Ipsos poll)

## The Parent POV

(point of view)

**Think you know what kind of language your teen uses when you are not around? Take some time to ask these questions...you just might be surprised.**

1. With all the things that you are faced with, do you think cussing or telling a dirty joke is really a big deal? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think so many teens and adults cuss on a daily basis?
3. What do you think about a person who uses bad language? Do you think the way a person talks is a reflection of who they are? Why or why not?
4. Do you find it hard at times to watch what you say? When do you struggle with cussing the most?



## Focus on Prayer

### Pray that:

1. Your teen will realize the power of words and that words can be damaging weapons to a person.
2. God will give each family member much patience and self-control before opening their mouth in any situation.
3. God will provide your teen with godly friends who will hold them accountable in speech, actions, and attitudes.
4. God will help you watch your language and even your tone, as you set the right example for your family.

### ...UPDATE CONTINUED

Learning how to worship together is important. Worshiping the Lord as a body helps draw us close to one another. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, "let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near." This is exactly what coming together as a body of youth in worship will do. So encourage your child to join us.

On another note we want to inform you that we will be starting a web blog. This will be an opportunity for our youth to receive instruction, engage in the learning process, and begin to take ownership of what they are learning.

The purpose of this tool will be to stimulate mature thinking patterns and strengthen a sense of community as they will have opportunity to post comments in response to the main post once a month. Encourage your youth to participate. We will be sending more information to you shortly. We insure it will be a safe internet experience, as we will moderate all the content.

Until next time, God Bless.



### Did you know...

- \* A poll by Zogby International found that 72 percent of those polled wanted television programming to have positive, anti-promiscuity and anti-violence messages. ([verticalthought.org](http://verticalthought.org))
- \* 67% of Americans say they think people curse and swear more often than they did 20 years ago. ([jsonline.com](http://jsonline.com))
- \* Nearly three-quarters of Americans questioned last week — 74 percent — said they encounter profanity in public frequently or occasionally, according to an Associated Press-Ipsos poll. ([msnbc.com](http://msnbc.com))
- \* 69% of parents are concerned that their teens hear "adult language" on TV, and 67% of parents think TV gives teens the wrong idea about what is acceptable. ([moralityinmedia.org](http://moralityinmedia.org))

