

# PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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## WHAT YOU SAY IS NOT WHAT PEOPLE HEAR

On one occasion I had the privilege of sharing the gospel with an honest young lady in her mid-twenties. Her name was Tolitia Zimmerman. Tolitia had no traditional/denominational baggage to discard; thus she readily accepted the truth and was baptized into Christ (**Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:1-5**).

In the months following her decision to obey the gospel, I spent much time working to help Tolitia become grounded and settled in the faith (**Col. 1:21-23**). Such was accomplished via personal Bible studies held at my office each Monday morning. I would teach. A gentle older saint named Doris served as a silent partner. Tolitia was always on time. She always had a good attitude. She always came with pen and paper. She seemingly soaked up each lesson. All was well.

During one of those weekly sessions, Tolitia was telling us how she had gotten into a verbal tussle with a family member a few days prior. She said that one particular member of her family always acted like such a “B.”

I knew what she meant. So did Doris. So did God.

Not wanting to serve as an enabler, I took the opportunity to teach Tolitia about euphemisms; i.e. “the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that offends or suggests something unpleasant” (Webster).

I explained to Tolitia that when she uttered such phrases, whether she believed it or not, what she said is not what people heard. I explained to her that attempts to water down profanity failed before God and man. She was stunned to learn such information. However, being one of those rare individuals with a good and honest heart (**Luke 8:15**), Tolitia sure was grateful. I never heard her utter what one has called “polite curse words” again. As far as I know, she abandoned the practice altogether.

Looking back over the time I have been preaching, I wish I could say others have been as receptive as Tolitia was when it came to the subject of euphemisms. Many times I have been labeled a “pharisee,” “a phone-boother,” “a radical,” or something else for trying to help people by pointing out their improper, euphemistic uses of the tongue.

Again, a euphemism is defined by Webster as: “the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that offends or suggests something unpleasant.” In that I know of no other way to make the point, let’s now note some common euphemisms. Here goes:

Heck Yeah; Dad Gum; Freakin’; Friggin’

Dog Gone; Dog Gone It; Crap; Gosh; Man Alive

Oh My Gosh; Golly; GD; Gee; Jeez; Bull

Dang; Darn; Darn It; Dang It; Gosh Darn It

God Darn; God Dang; Shoot; Flipping



### **Sadly, I have heard many of these terms uttered by those who have been redeemed.**

Now here is the test (and be honest): when you read each term you knew what it was that was being communicated even though the message was watered down, didn’t you? Folks, note this point and note it well: watered down filthy language is still filthy language.

Brethren, I have heard some at Palmer Road use euphemisms. When I am not careful one will slip out of my mouth. It needs to stop, and it needs to stop right now.

If you’re one who thinks it is fine to use euphemisms, then you are wrong. Moreover, you find yourself at odds with God’s will. You must repent or face the consequences (**Rom. 2:6-8**).

Hear afresh: “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*” (**Eph. 4:29**).