

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
Audio Media Services
Fearless – Ep 111 – Bad Language
Final Transcript

Cissie Graham Lynch:

00:00:00 Recently I was in a restaurant and somebody offended me and I *had* to bite my tongue. And I realized we don't always get it right. I know I don't always get it right, but in today's episode of *Fearless*, we're going to talk about the power of the tongue.

MUSIC STARTS

Cissie:

00:00:15 Hi, I'm Cissie Graham Lynch. Welcome to *Fearless*, helping you have a fearless faith in a compromising culture.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:00:35 Have you noticed recently everywhere you go that everyone seems angry and volatile and people's tongues and languages have gotten out of control? Doesn't matter if you're driving down the road. Every time I get in my car, somebody's yelling at somebody or honking. Whether you go to a Costco parking lot—that could be one of the most volatile places you go. People are *very* eager to get into Costco and getting out. Or if you're online and you're reading people's comments—people's comments have seemed to get out of control and just so hateful these days. If you're sitting at a restaurant, people complaining, but yes, even inside the church, just people's tongues and languages and what they say have just been shocking to me.

And so something we've been working on in our house in a conversation that I've been telling my kids and with Corey, that in this world that we're living—especially after COVID, everything seems to happen after 2020, that people are more angry, more upset, more sensitive—but I've been telling my kids and our family that we have to be so careful as Christians, that we have to be intentional *not* to react to the world the way the world would react. And this is something that the Lord has really challenged me in this past week. Many times I've had to bite my tongue, and that can be so difficult in a world where people are yelling back at you. I was just at a Panera and somebody was so rude to me when I ordered that I literally had to bite my tongue. I said, Lord, You were just teaching—I was just teaching this to my kids. And that can be difficult because what we say portrays us to the world and what we don't say and how we say it, because the world is watching us.

And just recently, Corey was working on his car. He has a Prius and a yes I know, shocking. My husband can drive a Prius. He does have a truck, but he loves his good old and faithful Prius. Just last year he was laughing that in 10 years it has never broken down. Hmm. Well, ended up breaking down this past week and it ended up being this very tiny part. But that tiny part took the whole vehicle down and it was this little small part on the circuit board that blew up and the entire car would not work. And he had to take out the back seats. He had to take out the spare tire, all these parts to get to the

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battery, and this itty bitty circuit board. And he did all this YouTube researching—'cause I also laughed that my husband thinks he's YouTube certified on everything—but as he pulled it out, they were right, these YouTube experts, and it was this tiny little part that affected the entire car and destroyed its ability to drive. And as in James, in Scripture, when he compares a large ship and a strong wind and it's steered by a very small rudder. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body that can corrupt the whole body and set the whole course of one's life on fire.

But when it comes to the tongue, this is another subject that I feel like where Christians have thrown in the towel. It's kind of like the last subject we just talked about. And this is one that people think it's no big deal. And it seems like many of us have become tone deaf to language and what people are saying. It often doesn't offend us anymore, or we're not affected by what we hear in songs or in our television and when we're talking to people. And I think sadly, the world doesn't even realize they're saying it. It's become so a part and so accustomed to their everyday talk, they don't even realize when foul language is coming out of their mouth. And I see that even with Christian brothers and sisters inside the church with their foul language. And Corey and I can still be shocked sometimes, we'll get in the car and we're like, I can't believe that person just said that. And it's just another subject where we have become like the world and we are acting like the world and I think we as Christians, we have to hold each other accountable. Like we've talked here on *Fearless*. And so on today's episode, we're talking about the tongue because James 1:26 says, "*Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight reign on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.*" And James is a very black-and-white writer.

And Corey used to use this Scripture just as a reminder to him that when he was in the locker room—I shared the story of when he was on the football field, and he did not curse. He was known to be the Christian on the team. And the whole practice stopped one day when they thought he had said a bad word. And right then, just as James says, if he had, that whole team would've considered his religion worthless. And how many times have we walked into like a business meeting or somewhere and somebody that we are known to be as a Christian in our community or our town, you know, starts talking filthy or nasty or ugly inside the meeting? And all of a sudden in that moment, your whole attitude towards them fails. And it's just as Scripture says, because when something like that comes out of somebody's mouth, the world would consider your religion worthless.

And it's not just, you know, exactly what we're saying, but how we're saying and not having control on our tongues and our reactions, just as like we're reacting to the world. I really recognized that this summer inside my home with my kids and what they were saying to one another and the struggle of controlling their tongues with their frustration and their tone to one another. And of course I know they learned it from me because I was speaking in frustration. And so we've taught our children that. So we kind of had to do a reset in our family, not just of what we were saying, but how we were saying it, how

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we were treating one another because of what God commands us to do and how we're to speak one another. And there's 126 Bible verses in Scripture that talk about the tongue.

And when you claim to be a Christian, the world is watching you—and I've said that before here on *Fearless*. You know, obviously your kids watch you. I've learned that and we've probably have all failed at that as parents at some point. Think about when you're in a coffee shop and you're reading your Bible and you have your devotions out, but the barista gets your coffee wrong and you don't talk to her correctly. You know, the barista's watching you, people inside of restaurants, your classmates, your teammates, your friends, those people who you do business with in your community, they are constantly watching you. And they want to know if you're going to slip up, if you're going to be like them, because the world would *love* for Christians to slip up and to be like them. But one of the first impressions we make as a Christian in our communities, those around us, with strangers is with our mouth.

So let's talk about how we talk and where we get in trouble. And the first one is profanity and the vulgarity of the curse words. We had moved into a home and we were having our garage doors worked on and somebody came to work on 'em, and the person that was working on them kept saying the F-word over and over. And our neighbor came over to Corey the next day and said, Man, you must have really been frustrated. My wife heard you saying the F-word over and over, but you know what, I know you're a Christian and I'm just glad to know you're just like me, and it kind of shocked Corey. So Corey had to inform him that that was not him who was speaking, and that we as a family don't speak like that. Because, just as James 1:26 says, in that moment, maybe that if that neighbor had heard Corey and realized that Corey speaks like that, our witness for years to come would've been worthless because our religion would be worthless. He would see us no different. And so I just encourage you—that is a powerful verse that Corey and I have clung to over the years, and just wherever God takes us in our community and with our careers, that we're to be very careful with what we say.

But we often, you know, say foul language because we're venting in frustration or anger or we want to insult somebody. Or sometimes we often want to feel like we belong to a group. And I'm always amazed of how many grown men still feel like they have to talk with a filthy mouth to fit into a group. Because I remember Corey and I were at this building convention and there was this table sitting next to us and the men, the vulgarity that came out of them, and of course these aren't—well, I don't know them, they were strangers. I don't know if they're believers or not—but it was just kind of like they were trying to 'up' one another and continue with the conversation and stuff, and it always amazes me, no matter how old we get, we still feel like we have to fit in and use foul language to fit in.

And I think the danger where this has come is, as Christians, we have to be so careful of what we're inviting into our homes and our hearts. We have to be careful of what

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we're watching and the music we're listening to. I go to a gym and the music can be music that I don't listen to and sometimes I can just tune it out. But one day I was listening, I couldn't believe the language, and I remember saying something. I had to ask them just very politely, Hey, do you mind changing the music 'cause my children are in here? And most of the time people are so gracious when you politely and respectfully ask them. But what was shocking to me is that many parents didn't care. They didn't mind if their children were listening to that—and sadly that is the world, but we have to be careful what we're inviting into our homes and into our hearts because I think of the television shows—

I remember there's this television show that is very popular out there and everybody recommended it to me. I turned it on and every other word was the F-word. And I told you just the conviction I had of what we were watching; I shared that with an episode of *Fearless* not too long ago, just in the last couple years, a real conviction of what we are watching on our televisions and the language we're allowing into it. Because it's kind of like what we teach our children: Be careful little ears what you hear, be careful little eyes what you see. That doesn't just go away after we get to a certain age. We have to be careful as adults. 'Cause I was thinking, OK, we tell our children, you know, you can't say that word. That's a bad word. That's a bad word. That's a bad word if it's coming out of their mouth. But at what point is it not a bad word for them to say? At what point? OK, you're 16 now. It's not a bad word. No, if it's bad, it's bad. And we as parents have to be learning. We have to remember, we have to be careful what we put into our own hearts because Romans 12:2 says we are not to be conformed to this world and we cannot be acting like this world. And we have to be set apart and we have to be different.

Another place we can get trouble is words that hurt, words that are piercing, and words that can destroy. And when we first got married, I had a tongue that could burn the whole house down. It was a deadly tongue. I just knew how to hurt with it. I knew how to stab and jab with it. And I had to change it because I came to a quick realization: I was going to destroy my marriage, and thankfully, you know, Corey stood up to me. But the Lord and the Holy Spirit really had to work in my heart ... because the power of the tongue and what it can say, and the Scripture says in Proverbs 18:21, "*Life and death are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*" I don't often read from The Message, but it says, "*Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit—you choose.*" And I had to decide that in my own life; I was going to destroy it. And God had to change my heart and had to change my tongue. We can't just say, I was born like that. I was born with a sharp tongue. Or ... we can't make excuses. We have to change it.

Because I look at how we as Christians talk to each other, I am shocked, especially on our online community and the worlds that we live in, what people who claim to be Christians and the things that they say online, how hurtful and deadly. It's because we now live in a world we can type or say whatever we want without the consequences, of the fear of probably getting punched in the face. 'Cause let's face it, you know, 20 or 30

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years ago, we would say some of this stuff to somebody's face and they would punch us, but now we can kind of get away with that, you know, hidden behind a keyboard.

But it's so important to teach our children that the things that they put out there, the hate and the hurt, there are serious consequences out there. And once again, our children learn it from us. The things that they put on TikTok, Snapchat, these stories that are long-lasting damage. You know, we can look at kids getting bullied and hurt and suicide rates because of things that were said in TikTok, and kids will say, Oh, I was just joking. No, there's serious consequences to that. And because of the culture we live in, it's gone to a whole different level of conversations we're going to have to have; our children to be so careful that those stay out there in the world forever and the long-lasting damage they can have.

But of course, we can always get in trouble with our tongue when it comes to gossip. Once again, I'm telling a lot of stories on myself today, but even just last night, I had to put the phone down 'cause I was going to call a friend, and it wasn't like the gossip, Did you know she did this and he did that, da da. It wasn't kind of that, but I realized I was still going to complain about something to somebody and that that was going to have no benefit to my conversation or my relationship with that person. And so I just put my phone down. Sixty-three percent of Americans say gossip isn't good for society, but about half of Americans also confess that they've engaged in it. And let's just be honest, it's all of us engage in gossip at some time. And we just have to be careful because Romans 1:29 says, "*They are gossips, slanders, God-haters, ... and boastful;*" and, "*they invent ways of doing evil.*" And we know how serious gossip is. We know the dangers it can be; we know how it can hurt; it can break relationships; it can separate us and separate the best of friends according to Proverbs, and it can be the spreading of lies and it can be just a dangerous fire that is set—and I think we've all been guilty of it. There's probably been times we've had to go to our friends or co-worker or family and apologize for the things that we have said. But Proverbs 21 also says that we are to guard our tongues. We are to be so careful of what we say.

Another area is blasphemy. And how often do we hear God's Name taken in vain? And it's like, are we even shocked anymore? Like, I want to ask you the question: When you hear somebody say God's Name in vain or Jesus Christ, are you shocked? Does it hurt? Does it like pain you? Because honestly, when we think about it, that's our Heavenly Father. That's Jesus Christ who died for the world, whose arms were just outstretched and hung before the world and surrendered His life for you and me. And people are just taking His Name in vain and it really doesn't hurt us anymore when they say it. We have to remember, it's one of the Ten Commandments. That's how serious it is. That's where God listed it, and that we are just ignoring it, that we have kind of once again accepted it because we hear it over and over in our society, in the songs and in the entertainment, that we don't even recognize it when it is taken in vain anymore.

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But let's talk the talk of being set apart as Christians ... 'cause on *Fearless*, we talk about having the courage to have your life be set apart from the culture. And as I've said, I think we as Christians, we've thrown in the towel on this one, on our language, and we need to pick that towel back up. We teach our children, 'Be careful little eyes what you see and be careful little ears what you hear,' but we expose ourselves to things that are dangerous and we disregard it when it comes to our own standards as adults. And the words placed in your heart through the things that you watch, the things that you read, that is what becomes what we say. Because Jesus says and speaks on this subject of out of the mouth will speak the heart. That's going to reveal what's inside of our heart. So I want to encourage you, this is not an episode to condemn, but to really do a self-evaluation. And is this something you personally have thrown the towel in on? Or how do we start, you know, this slow climb back up the mountain? If we, over the years, have allowed all this language inside of our heart—and to be honest, it's hard to get it out of there because even though that's not a language that I speak out loud, there's still words that have hidden in my heart that I learned as a teenager and as a kid that have been there. And even in the privacy of my own home, or when I'm mad in frustration, I can say something and I have to surrender that to the Lord, to remove that—because once it's there, it's hard to get out of there. And I just encourage you to surrender that to the Lord. Begin to pray that He would convict your heart, convict your mouth even before you speak it, to change the ways that we're speaking.

And then I would encourage you in this world that is full of hurtful and hateful speech, don't join the noise of anger, fear, spiteful, hateful ugliness in our conversations, and how we will respond the next time we're in a parking lot and somebody's beeping their horn and yelling and flicking us off. But to be reminded that we are to be the fruits of the Spirit. And so often we forget the Bible verse, you know, the fruits of the Spirit. We teach it to our children when they're in preschool or kindergarten, but we disregard it when we get to be adults. "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love [and] joy [and] peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control.*" And that we have to remember that in this world that we're in, and it's like I've been teaching my kids, I said at the very beginning, we cannot respond the way that the world responds, that we *are* to be different.

Another thing is press pause before you speak. I remember one time I was going onto the CNN interview and they had told me what we're going to talk about. But right before I got on, minutes before, the producer calls me and says I was going to be joined by the president of GLAAD, and that's the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation group, and I was just shocked. I said, Oh my goodness. I knew that the producers, they were going to want this heated debate between the two of us, these two polarizing different worldviews. And I honestly can't remember anything that I said in that interview, never looked it up; I never want to see it again. But I remember the constant reminder of the Holy Spirit in this interview where I was looking straight into the camera, just saying, Let your tongue be seasoned with grace—and that's all I can remember. And that's my encouragement to you: press pause before you speak and before you

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respond. We can respond in this world—and there are times that we’re going to have to respond with conviction and truth and stand strong, but to always do it with grace. And [chuckle] sometimes the Holy Spirit will stop you before you speak and you better listen to the Holy Spirit or you could get yourself in trouble.

But I saw this quote on social media as I was preparing for this, and it said, A person with a harsh tongue has an angry heart. A person with a negative tongue has a fearful heart. A person with an overreactive tongue has an unsettled heart, and a person with a boasting tongue has an insecure heart. A person with a filthy tongue has an impure heart. And a person who’s critical all the time has a bitter heart. On the other hand, a person who always is encouraging has a grateful heart. A person who speaks gently has a loving heart. And a person who speaks fruitfully has an honest heart. And what kind of heart do you have? And Jesus said, *“A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”* And we have to be reminded to be so careful of what we put into our heart because those are the things that we speak.

So as we close, I ask you, what’s on your heart? What are you storing in your heart? The mouth is a diagnostic, just like Corey’s Prius repair was getting a diagnostic and finding out that it was just this tiny little part that was the problem, and that’s the same with us. It can be this tiny little problem as our mouth and the things that we’ve hidden in our heart. And this is a time just to pause, let the Holy Spirit, I’m not here to convict you, let the Holy Spirit move in your life and show you where you can improve, how we respond to a world that is coming against us. I think so often on here, you know, I encourage you to be fearless and we can kind of get that mixed up of saying going out and fearless is fighting and arguing and all those things, and there’s might be a time and place with that, but we can stand with truth and conviction, but we are always to do it with grace and with love. Just as the fruit of Spirit, it says we are to have patience in this world. We can’t lose our patience with our children or while we’re driving in the car, with strangers at the grocery store. So I just encourage you, take time, pray, ask the Lord where you can be seasoned with grace, how He can use you in your community, how you can respond, and how you can do better with the things that are hidden in your heart and the things that we speak.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Cissie:

00:21:42 Thank you for joining me here on *Fearless*. As always, I encourage you to follow me on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). Also, if you’ve missed any old episodes and would like to get caught up, you can check them out on CissieGrahamLynch.com.

CLOSING MUSIC

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