

I DON'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT

by Carl McMurray

"The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell," James 3:6.

The YMCA where I work out only has one clear channel available on the television set mounted over the treadmills so when I am on one, that is the channel I watch. Last week on the TODAY show there was an interesting story about the messages being printed on tee shirts for young girls. Being a mother herself, Katie Couric was taking the maker of these tee shirts to task for some of the messages such as the one showing a frothy mug with the words "How about one for the road?" or one that said "I got lucky on prom nite." She was pointing out the difficulty of teaching her daughter abstinence and "no alcohol" when messages like these (and worse) were being popularized. The tee shirt manufacturer's rationale that "they were all in fun" didn't seem to faze Katie one bit.

Strange. For a little while I got the impression that someone thought words meant something, that they actually carried a message and revealed something about the "messenger." It sounded like there was nothing "funny" about ugly words. And then I thought about the messages that I've been hearing with more and more frequency.

Email messages are full of email shorthand such as BTW (by the way) or IMHO (in my humble opinion) or even LOL (laughing out loud). What would you think if you received an email from a Christian using the term OMG (Oh my God)? Would you be impressed with the reverent handling of God's name or think this was just more worldly slang from someone who cares little for spiritual things?

In the past few months I've been treated to hearing words flow from the mouths of Christians such as "sucked," "frick'en," and "wuss." These are euphemisms for vulgar terms that I won't even define in an article like this. I have visited the websites of Christians that use even more bluntly foul language and condone the use of drugs, alcohol, and fornication. If a liberal media talking head like Katie Couric can get offended at messages of alcohol use and illicit intimacy, I'm beginning to wonder how stupid are we to keep buying into the same old excuses that this vulgar and profane speech "doesn't really mean anything," or "it's all done in fun."

"But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned," Matthew 12:36.