

## Couples In Bloom – #@\$%&?! Explaining Expletives

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“What the \_\_\_\_ is that?!”; “\_\_\_\_ it!”; “Oh, \_\_\_\_!” What are those who say these **expletives** trying to say? The word **expletive** comes from the combination of Latin words *ex-* (**completely**) and *plere* (**fill**). Those who use expletives attempt to **completely fill** their communication with intended meaning. We tend to associate expletives with negativity. There seems to be fewer positive expletives (“Glory!”, “Whew!”, “Amen!”) in existence.

The **optimistic** view of expletives is clarity by succinctness (i.e. ‘less is more’). Value is assigned by brief yet complete descriptions. The **pessimistic** view of expletives is the opposite: devaluation is assigned by brief and **incomplete** descriptions (e.g. curse words). Either way, the receiver of expletive communication is expected to understand the larger meaning which was not articulated or spelled out, so to speak. There is often an arrogant, self-assigned authority by those who choose to use (or are addicted to using) expletives.

“And they read aloud clearly in the Book of the Law of God, and **they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading**” ⇒ Nehemiah 8:8. “But let your word be, Yes, yes; No, no. For **whatever is more than these comes from evil.**” ⇒ Matthew 5:37. “For **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**” ⇒ Matthew 12:34-37 (read all four of these verses in Matthew 12 to receive the full impact of what Jesus said here).

The question is raised, “Do we **WANT** our hearer(s) to know what we really mean?” **GOD** sometimes hides (reserves) meanings for those who really want to know Him, who seek them out without stopping until they succeed ⇒ Isaiah 6:10; Matthew 13:10-17. God likes it that way ⇒ Jeremiah 29:13. Seeking someone with a pure heart **honors** them.

Marriage works the same way. Spouses are those who **NEED** to know what each other really mean. Therefore, expletives should be avoided unless they both understand what meaning is intended. Christians have the additional criteria of keeping expletives in the framework of God’s Word, will and Holy Spirit ⇒ Ephesians 5:4; 1 Peter 2:1.

Jesus called those who chose religiosity over relationship with Him a “generation of vipers” ⇒ Matthew 12:34 because their influential words led people away from truth. That could be described as a negative expletive, but not as a wrong expletive, in context. Likewise, positive expletives can be used to sin; e.g.: speaking truth with a critical spirit. God is the ultimate judge of everything we say and why we say it ⇒ Matthew 12:36.

Notice that when Jesus did use the “generation of vipers” expletive, He also took the time to explain to them in detail what He meant. **This is important.** The heart of God is all about relationship; He is willing for none to be cursed ⇒ Matthew 18:14. **Marriage is relationship; the hearts of spouses must appreciate the value of each other and therefore do whatever it takes to have and verify their communication is thorough.**

Besides successful **information** transfer, communication is for **relationship** transfer. If spouses lack the fruit of the Spirit while communicating, it shows that another spirit is at work; perhaps some unresolved issue. What should we do if that happens? Communicate!

God’s goal for relationship is successful exchange of goodness. To do that, notice that He rarely uses **expletives**; instead He **explains so we can understand.** ♥ Loren Falzone