

Why Some Expressions Are Better Left Unsaid. Forever.

I opened the door to an instantly cheerful Craig's List customer and her accompanying husband. They crossed our threshold and exuberantly discussed how they stumbled upon our ad, whom they were shopping for, and how they were just so lucky to live around the corner.

I, on the other hand, channeled my inner *Price is Right* hostess (minus the low-cut dress and flowing blonde hair), showed off our goods and pointed out their near-mint condition.

She stood there, tilted her head to the side, and considered. Then she looked at her husband, pointed out a few merits of each item, and made a phone call.

Finally, she said she'd take both.

When you're talking to strangers, watch your vocabulary

After she paid us, Ms. Craig's List looked around our house and made some small talk, playing off the photo of our kids hanging in the foyer.

"Oh, are these your children? They're adorable!" she asked.

"Now, we homeschooled when our kids were young...where do your children go to school?"

I felt a little like I was being interrogated. Like there should have been a naked, dangling lightbulb hanging near my forehead and a steel desk in the center of the room.

*"Oh, you **work** in the public schools?" she asked, directing her focus on my husband.*

*"Yeah, our son-in-law works at (this public school) district," She continued. "(Sigh) ...it's tough, but he's trying to make a difference. You know, **those kids down there...they're all white trash.**"*

I'm pretty sure my eyebrows may have found their way up to my bangs when I heard that expression. I looked to my husband to hear how he'd respond, praying for grace under my breath.

After a measurable pause, he simply stated, "**Well, our job is try to help all kids, and unfortunately there are a lot of them who live with a lot of needs right now.**"

Craig's List lady commiserated some sort of response and after saying goodbye, was out the door.

What our "expressions" reveal about our hearts

I exited to the kitchen, watching their headlights trail out of our driveway and point down the street in the other direction.

"I'm a little surprised she used the term "white trash" when she was talking to us!" I exclaimed. *"She doesn't even know us -- that seems pretty insensitive, don't you think?"* I asked my husband.

He responded, as he always does, with such love and wisdom:

"You know, the thing about it is, she's talking about kids. Real kids. And they have no control over the circumstances into which they were born."

We're all image-bearers

**"So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them." Gen 1:27**

Friends, we are all image-bearers. Our souls bear the imprint of a loving God.

Even those of us with greasy hair. With dirty clothes. With grubby hands. With dirt under our nails. With shoes that don't fit. With free & reduced hot lunches at school. With a mom who spends the grocery money on cigarettes and a dad who's unemployed.

When we flippantly call "the least of these" **white trash**, we call God's creation **white trash**. We call his handiwork and his redeemed **white trash**.

>>Is that the kind of message we want to model for our own children?

>>Do we want them to believe that because a child is poor and disheveled that he is intrinsically *less-than*?

As we dive headlong into a season that should be marked with peace and love, let's guard our tongue and guard our hearts. After all, it is only by God's grace that YOU and I weren't also born as one of the "least of these."

For more words that should be banished from our vocabularies, please see [Jeff Goins' post on the same](#).