

Do We Really Need a Sign for This?

By Larry Acheson
09/08/2025

Our society, as a general rule, tends to disregard many “rules”—rules that really shouldn’t need to be written down, but nevertheless have been put into writing because—you *guessed it*—the general public doesn’t adhere to them. Even some well-known basic rules of courtesy and etiquette, such as saying “please” and “thank you,” are often ignored. I’m left with the impression that many folks don’t *desire* to adhere to them. Or maybe they weren’t raised to adhere to them. If you have heard and responded to Yahweh’s higher calling, you know we, as believers, need to be different from those who are not. There are many unwritten rules of courtesy that, once upon a time, were taught at home. At least in most homes. Nowadays, laws are being passed to *enact* some of these basic rules. These days, I have to wonder the percentage of homes where the unwritten laws of courtesy are taught. Sadly, I’ve found that even some of my Yahwist friends violate at least one of the rules I have in mind.

Move Over for Emergency Vehicles

While driving through Missouri in November 2013, June and I couldn’t help but notice several very large signs along Interstate 44 that read, “**STATE LAW: Move over or slow down for stopped emergency or maintenance vehicles.**” They were fairly recent signs, which neither June nor I remembered from our previous trips through the state. When we returned home, I did some quick research and found that, indeed, they were put in place in 2012 as a result of the “Missouri Move Over Law.” We hadn’t previously driven through Missouri since our trip to visit our family in Illinois back in 2011.



The reason the signs made such an impression is not due to their immense size; rather, I couldn’t help but wonder, “*Why* do we need a sign reminding us to get out of the way or slow down for emergency vehicles?” Shouldn’t that be a natural instinct for *all* drivers? Of course, it only took a few seconds for me to realize why the sign was necessary: Sadly, many drivers don’t seem to care about emergency vehicles—they just fly right on past the flashing lights! June and I have witnessed this irresponsible and discourteous behavior on many occasions.

If everyone just naturally pulled over or showed basic respect for emergency vehicles, there would have been no need to pass a “Missouri Move Over Law.” It’s essentially the same principle as the “Give ‘Em A BRAKE!” signs reminding us to slow down for state highway workers. When we see men working on the road ahead, should we continue along our merry way without slowing down? Should we *really* need a sign telling us to “Give ‘Em a Brake”? Nevertheless, I can’t begin to remember how many times I’ve dropped to the recommended speed limit for work zones

only to immediately find someone “riding my bumper,” sending a non-verbal message to speed up because he or she is in a hurry. Then, once I’m in the clear, the tailgater sends *another* quick message by whipping around me in hyper-drive. So should we *really* need a sign advising us to slow down or move over for emergency vehicles? No, not *really*, but since some people don’t treat state highway workers any differently than a possum crossing the highway, a law had to be enacted protecting those employees.



Wait Your Turn to Speak!

I have found that some people have a natural tendency to either interrupt others or talk over them.

Needless to say, that is rude. No one likes being interrupted, but some folks don’t seem to think this unwritten rule applies to them. I especially notice how media personalities frequently interrupt their guests, which is a real turnoff for me. Admittedly, sometimes I am also guilty of interrupting. It’s usually when I find myself *thinking* the other person paused, giving me the “green light” to jump in, only to learn they weren’t actually finished yet. When that happens, we should apologize and let the speaker finish what he or she was saying.



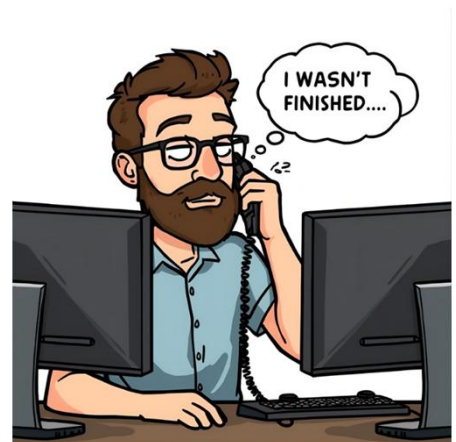
I remember one occasion in which I was on the phone with a co-worker, walking her through how to access a customer’s online portal. I would be halfway through a sentence when she would interrupt, apparently thinking she knew what I was about to say. But she was mistaken. I would then begin *another* sentence, only for her to finish it *again*. She was *still* mistaken. I began *another* sentence, only for her to once again cut me off mid-sentence. I could see nothing

was being accomplished and yes, I was beyond frustrated. I have come to realize there are some people who just naturally think they have free reign to finish other folks’ sentences without letting them finish.

In our everyday conversations with others, one party will inevitably interrupt the other. It happens. We should simply apologize for the interruption, then allow the first speaker to finish. This fits in with the Apostle Paul’s admonition to not merely look out for our own interests, but to also consider the interests of others:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. -- *Philippians 2:3-4*

What message do we send others when we interrupt them? Do we go against Paul's counsel in Philippians 2:3-4 when we interrupt others? Do we appreciate it when others cut *us* off mid-sentence? Is it okay for us to do it to *others*? And do we *really* need a sign for this?



I could go on and on. Some folks can be very rude—and *crude*. As it was in Bible times, so it is today. Have you ever heard someone preface a derogatory comment by saying, “Pardon my French, but”? I can usually imagine what comes next, and it’s not befitting someone whose faith is in Yahweh. Consider, for example, the Apostle Paul’s counsel in Colossians 3:8:

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, **filthy communication** out of your mouth.

The translators of the New International Version understood “filthy communication” as referring to “filthy language,” as in profanity:

8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and **filthy language** from your lips.

It should be clear that we, as followers of Messiah, should avoid using words that even secular society recognizes as “filthy.” This practice is not an easy one to follow, certainly not for someone like me, who, prior to my conversion, was known to use most, if not all, filthy words singular to the English language. I’ve “been there, done that.” Yet, I am thankful to say my wife of 47 years does not remember the last time she heard any such words proceed from my lips. *May it ever be so!*

I remember, back in the day, a popular slogan of the Oakland Raiders football team was, “**Real Men Wear Black.**” Maybe it still



is, although I think they're now playing home games in Las Vegas, Nevada. That slogan sounds *tough*. *Real men*, back in my college days, could also say *what* they wanted and *do* what they wanted. Only "wimps" were bound by rules of etiquette. That was the basic mindset I bought into before I committed to living a life pleasing to Yahweh and His Son. I have often thought of how easy it is to utter "filthy words." Back in the day, it was easy for me because I wanted to think of myself as a "real man." And yes, cussing made me *feel* like a "real man." I could say *what* I wanted *when* I wanted!

Later, I realized that, as easy as it is to blurt out four-letter words, it is considerably *more* difficult to



find substitute words. That wasn't so easy. I learned that *real* men, when tempted to utter cuss words, find alternate ways of expressing what's on their mind. Yes, it's soooo easy to say the "f" word! *Anyone can do it!* It's incredibly more difficult to find a substitute, more socially acceptable word! But if your focus is on Yahweh's Word, you *will* work on resisting the temptation. *Real men*, then, when tempted to say some inappropriate four-letter word, are able to dig deep and find something socially acceptable, and even morally decent, to say. I'm so glad the so-called "carefree" part of my life has passed—but, sadly, the temptation to return has never completely gone away. We all must continue to resist the temptation to sin, and that includes how we frame our words.

I remember, as a child, accompanying my dad on a visit to the local hospital in the town near where I grew up. He wanted to bring encouragement to a friend who was convalescing. We left his friend's room, and as we made our way through the hall, we overheard a man shouting and cursing, using words I had never heard in my life. My dad asked me, "Do you hear that? I knew that man when I was growing up, and he would *never* talk that way!" Clearly, the man's mind had deteriorated to the point that he was no longer able to control his speech. At that time, I was unable to process why my dad's former acquaintance was at that time cursing and yelling uncontrollably. I now understand what a complex organ our brain is, and I pray that I will be able to control my speech and thought processes until the day I pass away. How much more should I work to control my words while I'm in control of what I think and say! But even in my early Christian days, I would have asked, "Do we *really* need a sign for this?" Do we, as believers, need a sign instructing us to avoid using cuss words, or words otherwise deemed socially unacceptable? *Should it take a Bible verse to teach us that lesson?*

Dressing for the Sabbath

From time to time, the question of how to dress on Shabbat arises. It shouldn't. Many approach the Shabbat dress code from the perspective of "come as you are." I would reply, "Sure, if the best you have to offer Yahweh Almighty and His Son is 'come as you are' on that day, then sure, come as you are." Wear jeans. Wear shorts or "cutoffs." Wear whatever you might otherwise wear on any given day of the week—*if* that's the best you have to offer.



But I'm going to venture to say that nearly all of us, if not *all* of us, have clothes that we reserve for special occasions. I'm not referring to a tuxedo or a formal dress. I like how one woman worded it: "Show respect as if you're in front of a judge." *Respect for who?*



Your fellow congregants? While that reasoning would be worthy of consideration, it's not the answer. We gather as an assembly to worship *Yahweh and His Son*, so the respect is for *Them*. We do not worship empty, lifeless objects as the heathens do. We worship the eternal, loving creator of the universe, and when we pray to Yahweh, we believe He's right there listening to our prayers. So, on that one day of the week we set aside to worship Him and His Son, we must enter into that special time believing They are there with us. If we know they are there with us during that special time, why would we *not* choose to dress for that special occasion in the same way we would dress if we were required to appear before a judge?

If you knew you were to appear before a judge, what would *you* wear? Would you wear your everyday clothes *or* would you dress your best with the intent of making a favorable impression? Sadly, I've noticed that's not how a lot of people dress when coming before the Almighty for a worship service. I'm guessing this trend began when churches were pulling all the stops to gain new converts. Telling prospective converts to "come as you are" sounds more palatable and pleasant than telling them to dress as though they're appearing before a judge. Nevertheless, the casual *dress* approach suggests a casual *worship* approach. Those who aren't really all that serious about their relationship with the Almighty may not approach attending a worship service as though they're appearing before a judge. Yet, that is exactly what some folks do. When we come before the Almighty in a formal worship service, we're coming before the ultimate judge. *Shouldn't we dress accordingly?* Does there need to be a written rule outlining the appropriate attire for coming before the Almighty? Shouldn't it be a "given" that we should wear our best clothes, not our everyday attire?

Here's a couple of additional signs that seem to be needed in these modern, yet increasingly impolite, times:



I could add many more, such as "Use Turn Signals Prior to Changing Lanes" in traffic, just to name one. Or how about "Let Drivers Who Use Their Turn Signals Change Lanes in Front of You"? That would certainly be a polite gesture! If you would like to contribute some additional suggestions, I may include them within a forthcoming update! Thank you for reading!