

Gossip

Gossip = idle talk, rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others.

A. Gossip ruins relationships.

1. Gossip makes people angry.

“As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger!” Proverbs 25:23 (NLT)

“Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.” Proverbs 26:20 (NIV)

2. Gossip destroys trust.

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.”

Proverbs 11:13 (NLT)

“They visit me as if they are my friends, but all the while they gather gossip, and when they leave, they spread it everywhere.” Psalm 41:6 (NLT)

3. The damage done by gossip is very hard to undo.

“The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.”

Proverbs 18:8 (NIV)

“A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.” Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

“An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city. Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars.” Proverbs 18:19 (NLT)

B. Gossip undermines our credibility as believers.

“If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.” James 1:26 (NLT)

- a. Gossip is the practice of unbelievers.

“Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.”

Romans 1:28-29 (NLT)

- b. Gossip should NOT be the practice of Christians.

“For I am afraid that when I come to visit you I won't like what I find, and then you won't like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfishness, backstabbing, gossip, conceit, and disorderly behavior.” (2 Corinthians 12:20 NLT)

C. Four things we can do to stop gossip.

1. We can examine our hearts.

“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

Luke 6:45 (NIV)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

2. We can mind our own business.

“Stay calm; mind your own business; do your own job.” 1 Thessalonians 4:11 (MSG)

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers.” Proverbs 20:19 (NLT)

“Don't eavesdrop on others—you may hear your servant curse you. For you know how often you yourself have cursed others.” Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 (NLT)

3. We can hold our tongues.

“Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble.” Proverbs 21:23 (NLT)

“When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.” Proverbs 10:19 (NIV)

“Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent.”

Proverbs 17:28 (NLT)

“Don't bad-mouth your leaders, not even under your breath, And don't abuse your betters, even in the privacy of your home. Loose talk has a way of getting picked up and spread around. Little birds drop the crumbs of your gossip far and wide.” Ecclesiastes 10:20 (MSG)

4. We can confront others privately.

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.” Matthew 18:15 (NLT)

“When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret. Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation.” Proverbs 25:9-10 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out, surprised or confused you in this week's lesson on gossip?
2. Read James 1:26. Why does James say that if we can't control our tongues our religion is worthless? Do you agree? Why / why not?
3. Read Proverbs 10:19, 17:28, and 21:23. How good are you at holding your tongue? Whom do you know that is? What is their secret? Why do most of us struggle with saying too much rather than too little?
4. Read Proverbs 11:13, 16:28 & 25:23. Share an incident in which someone spread a rumor or gossiped about you. What happened? How did it make you feel? Did anyone ever apologize? If so, did it do any good? Why? Why not? Why is gossip so hard to forgive?
5. Read Luke 6:45 & Mark 7:20-23. Two days into your new job you are warned by two coworkers to never say anything to Martha. When you ask why they reply, "Because she's the mouth of the South! She can't wait to spread rumors." This alarms you because Martha had asked you a number of questions about your past, your family, and what you thought of your new boss. Now you can't remember what you said. What should you do?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated." Mark Twain

"Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you." Spanish Proverb

"Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead." Benjamin Franklin

"What is told in the ear of a man is often heard 100 miles away." Chinese Proverb

"Gossip needn't be false to be evil - there's a lot of truth that shouldn't be passed around." Frank A. Clark

"Trying to squash a rumor is like trying to unring a bell." Shana Alexander

"Each word we utter should have to pass through three gates before we say it. At the first gate we must ask, "Is it true?" At the second gate, "Is it necessary?" and at the third gate, "Is it kind?" Unknown
7. Read Proverbs 25:9-10 & Matthew 18:15. How good are you at confrontation? Why do many people avoid confrontation and talk to others about their problems instead? Why is privacy essential to good conflict resolution? Have you ever been confronted regarding something you said about to someone else? What happened?
8. Read Psalm 139:23-24 & 141:3. Spend some time as a group praying for God to search your hearts and guard your mouths this week. Ask God to show you what changes you need to make.