

# Guarding Against Gossip

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## I. Introduction

A. Definition: "Speaking about someone in a way that defames, dishonors, or otherwise hurts character."

Criteria: The listener does not need to know. It doesn't require action.

B. This is a serious problem.

1. In interpersonal relationships: family, friends. Luke 12:51-53
2. In the church.
3. In the counseling office.
4. Social media quickly spreads gossip.

C. We are all capable of gossip.

D. Don't ignore it or hope it doesn't do too much damage.

## II. The Bible addresses this issue.

A. In the Old Testament.

1. Gossip hurts. Proverbs 12:18
2. Noah's shame. Genesis 9:20-27
3. Job's friends.
4. David and Ziba. II Sam. 16:1-4/II Sam. 19:24-30

B. In the New Testament.

1. The tongue is hard to tame. James 3:1-8
2. It is in a list of serious sins. Romans 1:29

## III. The damage this sin can cause.

A. Since this is a sin, we need to put it to death. Romans 8:13 Col. 3:5 Heb. 12:1-2

B. Gossips hurt themselves. Prov. 19:5

C. Gossips hurt their hearers. Proverbs 17:4 Prov. 6:16-19

1. We can be tempted to lead someone to gossip.
2. We can be tempted to think badly about others based on what someone has told us, without proof.

D. Gossips hurt the one being gossiped about.

## IV. The difficulty in confronting this sin.

A. We may find it hard to determine if a story is gossipy.

B. This sin is appealing to us. Prov. 18:8 Prov. 26:22

C. We talk too much and gossip spills out. Prov. 10:19 Prov. 20:19

D. We may become the next subject for the gossip!

## V. The blessings of avoiding this sin.

A. God calls us to be trustworthy. Prov. 14:15

B. God promises that when we stay away from a gossip, we will be blessed. Proverb 20:19  
Proverbs 17:4

- VI. What should we do when we hear gossip?
- A. Refuse to listen.
  - B. Rebuke the sin.
    - 1. Interrupt.
    - 2. Call it a sin.
  - C. Redirect it.
    - 1. Jesus died for this sin.
    - 2. Send the person back to the one who offended them.
    - 3. If the gossip was a lie, confess and ask forgiveness.
      - a. Forgiveness from God.
      - b. Forgiveness from the person who was told.
      - c. Forgiveness from the person who was the target of the gossip.
    - 4. Suggest following up later.
- VII. How should our speech be governed?
- T – Is it true?
  - H – Is it honest?
  - I – Is it inspiring?
  - N – Is it necessary?
  - K – Is it kind?
- VIII. Some examples of Positive Speech
- A. The Bible tells us how to speak. Eph. 4:29 Titus 3:2
  - B. We primarily need to guard our heart. Luke 6:45 Matt. 15:18-19 Psalm 19:14
  - C. Jesus is our supreme example.
- IX. Conclusion

Resources:

Resisting Gossip: Winning the War of the Wagging Tongue by Matthew C. Mitchell

Damsels in Distress: Biblical Solutions for Problems Women Face by Martha Peace

War of Words: Getting to the Heart of Your Communication Struggles by Paul David Tripp

Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate by Jerry Bridges