



## Does Gossip Really Hurt Anyone?

**James 3:8-9:** (NASB) *<sup>8</sup>But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;*




Gossip - is it ever useful or good or is it always a waste of time and bad? Have you ever stopped to consider just how much of our present culture not only accepts gossip but places it in the enviable and important position of being a core and driving value of our everyday existence? Think about just how many publications, TV programs, talk shows and news items are driven by gossip. Now think about how much of our conversations at our workplace or with our friends revolve around gossip. If you see it as I do, we are relentlessly inundated with gossip at every turn. So, what can we do about it? What should we do about it? How can we reduce the role of gossip in our lives and what should we replace it with?

As we begin, let us be clear on what gossip is and its relationship to slander:

**Gossip (noun)**

Dictionary.reference.com  
Synonyms: blab, dish, talk, tattle  
wag, spill the beans



1. Idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others
2. Light, familiar talk or writing
3. A person given to tattling or idle talk

**Slander**

Merriam Webster Dictionary

1. The utterance of false charges or misrepresentations, which defame and damage another's reputation
2. A false and defamatory oral statement about a person - compare with libel



What is the difference? *Gossip* is more along the lines of idle and careless talk. It is the creating or repeating of things that should not be said because they are not true, not the whole story or because they are no one else's business. Gossip can and does happen easily and sometimes unintentionally.



*Slander* is more in line with a spoken misrepresentation of someone that has the intention of damaging that person's character, reputation or record. It is much harder (though not impossible) to slander someone without intention.

**Both of these things are spoken of in Scripture and both are NEVER in a positive light:**

**Romans 1:28-31:** (NRSV) <sup>28</sup>And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. <sup>29</sup>They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are **gossips**, <sup>30</sup>**slanderers**, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, <sup>31</sup>**foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.**

**James 3** reveals how gossip works and how to stop it.

**Gossip can be a defense mechanism** - perhaps you feel inferior to someone and as comparisons arise you let a little unverified story slip out about them to give others reason for doubt.

**James 3:1-2:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup>For we all stumble in many ways. **If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.**



A caller from Chicago suggests gossip can be a delusion by the Adversary because he makes us feel good about gossiping and talking about people. It is a terrible thing. We should always remember the Lord's instruction in **Matthew 18:15**: *If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.* If you have an issue with someone, you are to go to them alone at first and try to bring it up. Sometimes people with good intentions who are well-meaning can still be busybodies, and it is such a trap. Christians need to be on guard against this.

 **1 - Sense of superiority, Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time**

- *Here are seven reasons that gossip is pure poison: First, it feeds a false and ugly sense of superiority in our own hearts. One of the main reasons, the thing behind the thing, that causes us to gossip or speak badly behind the back of another person is it somehow makes us feel a little better about ourselves or our own shortcomings and failed endeavors. We secretly - but falsely - believe that we're better than that person, and we don't recognize that we've probably done or certainly could do the exact same things that person's accused of.*

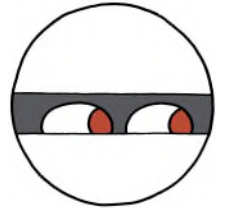


## Is gossip an ego thing or is it a weapon?

**Gossip can be a feeding of one's own ego** - you have a need to establish your own importance so you do so, not by drawing attention to your own accomplishments but by creating attention on another's perceived (or made up) faults or shortcomings.

### 2 - Sows distrust, *Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time*

- *Second, gossip sows distrust amongst your team, family and friends. When your friends or coworkers hear you tearing someone else down, even when painted with a false sense of care for that individual, it causes others who hear you to wonder about what you might be saying about them when they're not around. It's not good. If you value open and trusting relationships, avoid gossip and off-handed talk about others altogether.*



How are we using the social media tools of Facebook, Twitter, etc.? Today it is easy to say something without any accountability. Even though they are written words and not spoken, *they are still your words and can be hurtful to others.*



James 3:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. <sup>4</sup>Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

Sometimes it is the smallest things that can cause the biggest problems. The warning here started with those who have the most responsibility - with great responsibility comes great temptation...



Song of Solomon 2:15: (NASB) *Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom.*

Perhaps one of these *little foxes* can be gossip - being loose and creative with information about others that might be a stretching of truth or should just not be spoken, even if true.

Ephesians 4:14-16: (NRSV) <sup>14</sup>We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.

It is so easy to fall prey to the subtle suggestions that may arise, especially if those suggestions are in line with the thinking of our baser nature. Sowing seeds of doubt about people means we do not respect them. Gossip drives our natural inclination of lifting ourselves up.

<sup>15</sup>But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

*Speaking the truth in love* - In so doing, we can grow up from silly children to mature Christians. Love changes how, when and what we speak. We are supposed to favor others instead of our own ego.



**Gossip can be a passive-aggressive weapon** - you may be engaged in a difficult debate (politics is a good example) and as you are trying to solidify your perspective as being the correct one, you slide a little gossip in as an emotional barb against your opponent.

 **3 - Harms your witness, *Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time***

- *Third, it harms your personal Christian or spiritual witness. If you're a Christian or someone who has a strong spiritual conviction and you care about others, you stand to severely deteriorate the perception of your opinions and values in the eyes of others when you participate in gossip and backbiting. How could someone trust what you say is true about God when they can't trust themselves with you?*

**James 3:6:** (NASB) *And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell (Gehenna).*

James is pinpointing the most volatile and contagious factor in our lives - our tongue - our words. They can become the adornment of wrongfulness and a soiling stain upon our very being if we are trying to be Christ-like. They can begin a course in our lives that leads directly to our own destruction, not to mention the damage it does to others.



**Matthew 15:11-14:** (NASB) *<sup>11</sup>It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man. <sup>12</sup>Then the disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement? <sup>13</sup>But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. <sup>14</sup>Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.*

What we say truly does reveal our thoughts and our actions - where am I leading others?

**So gossip is an ego thing and a weapon - what else is it?**



CQ App user comments: **Proverbs 11:12-13:** (NIV) *A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue. A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.*

**Gossip can be a deflector of attention** - when the focus is not where you are comfortable, revealing a dramatic sounding "tidbit" about someone else can ease that discomfort.

 **4 - Destroys your integrity, *Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time***

- *Fourth, gossip destroys your integrity. In business, ministry, or with friends your integrity is more valuable than gold. The definition of integrity in Merriam Webster's is "the quality of being honest and fair; the state of being complete or whole." Talking about another person that's not present or in a negative manner brings question upon your character.*



Kathy gives a woman's perspective:



I appreciated a point from your program on **September 8, 2013, "Is it Really That Bad to Gossip?"** Gossip makes you feel included. It does make you feel included in a social group but it also makes you feel bad. I have had people say, "I should not have repeated that experience of our friend." My response has been, "That is okay, now I know how to pray for them." But, it is not okay! My response should have been, "You are right, I should not have

listened and the words should not have been spoken. Let's say a prayer now together asking God to forgive us."

Another aspect of gossip that is so insidious is talking about our family. Just as lies can be called "white lies," this seems like "white gossip." I don't want to brag about my children, so instead I tell unflattering stories about them. I remember as a child begging my mom not to tell stories about me, I thought it was so embarrassing. My children have said the same to me and I shrugged it off. But telling stories about our children or complaining about other family members at least is murmuring and can be or lead to gossip.

*Psalm 51:10: Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

This helps me focus my mind where I want it to be instead of talking about others in an unflattering way.

*1 Corinthians 1:10: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

Lastly, I was thinking about how we can give people labels which may conjure negative images in people's minds. Before even meeting someone, another may have a negative perception of them because of the label you gave them. Apostle Paul addresses this in 1 Corinthians 1:12 when he explains he has heard there were divisions among the Corinthian brethren and it should not be. He said, "Some say they are of Paul, some of Apollos and some of Cephas - this is wrong and divisive."

**James 3:7-10:** (NASB) *<sup>7</sup>For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. <sup>8</sup>But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; <sup>10</sup>from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.*

Our thoughts and words have power. James continues by showing the magnitude of the task of taming the tongue. It is a *restless evil* - an unstable and destructive force dripping with poison. We use our words to bless God and





then to curse His human creation - what hypocrisy!

We need to be respectful of others, even if we do not agree with them. Rise above the pettiness of gossip.

This next text is written by Paul quoted from several Old Testament verses.

**Paul compares Jews called to Christ to Gentiles called to Christ. He concludes that all are captive under sin:**

**Romans 3:13-18:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*their throat is an open grave, (Psalms 5:9) with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; (Psalms 140:3) <sup>14</sup>whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; (Psalms 10:7) <sup>15</sup>their feet are swift to shed blood, <sup>16</sup>destruction and misery are in their paths, <sup>17</sup>and the path of peace they have not known. (Isaiah 59:7,8) <sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Psalms 36:1)*

Words bring results. Words of gossip if unchecked will bring us to actions of unrighteousness, which will bring us to a state of rationalizing and acceptance towards godless behavior. Words often start as an emotional reaction without our thinking the situation through.

### Parable of the Feathers: TAKE IT BACK



Once upon a time a man living in a small town gossiped about his neighbor. He spread a rumor that was a dramatic misunderstanding about what his neighbor had done and who his neighbor was. It really messed up his neighbor's life.

So, he went to the local minister and he said, "I've really messed up. I've spread rumors about my neighbor that are not true. And now everybody has this thought in their heads about him. What should I do?"

The minister thinks a moment and says, "I want you to go to the house of everybody you spoke these untruths to and I want you to put a feather on the doorstep of every household." The man said, "I don't know what good that will do, but I'm desperate."

He does as he was told and it takes him several weeks to place the feathers, because he really spread the word. He put a feather on every doorstep. He came back to the minister and says, "I put feathers out all over town to everyone I spoke to." The minister says, "Now, I want you to go collect those feathers." The man says, "I can't do that. They would have blown away by now." The minister looks at him and says, "Exactly! What you did, you can't undo. Because of the poison of your words, that man may be permanently damaged. You need to pray for forgiveness."

The moral of this story is words are indeed important. Once they leave your lips, you cannot take them back.

**We have a choice as to what we feed to those around us:**

**Proverbs 26:18-23:** (NRSV) <sup>18</sup>*Like a maniac who shoots deadly firebrands and arrows, <sup>19</sup>so is one who deceives a neighbor and says, I am only joking! <sup>20</sup>For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases. <sup>21</sup>As charcoal is to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife. <sup>22</sup>The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body. <sup>23</sup>Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are smooth lips with an evil heart.*

**Compare and choose!**

**Proverbs 10:17-23:** (NRSV) <sup>17</sup>*Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray. <sup>18</sup>Lying lips conceal hatred, and whoever utters slander is a fool. <sup>19</sup>When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but the prudent are restrained in speech.*



<sup>20</sup>The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the mind of the wicked is of little worth. <sup>21</sup>The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense. <sup>22</sup>The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it. <sup>23</sup>Doing wrong is like sport to a fool, but wise conduct is pleasure to a person of understanding.

**Often those that criticize others reveal what he himself lacks. - Shannon L. Alder**

**Gossip can be the result of idleness** - because things can tend to get boring and monotonous, you begin to gravitate towards stories or hearsay that have some spice to it and now you have something to focus on, share and be a part of.

 **5 - Harms/destroys relationships, Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time**

- Fifth, it harms or ends relationships. Have you ever heard that someone was talking about you and not in a very positive light? I bet it didn't feel good or serve to draw you closer to that person or add warmth to your relationship, did it? Gossip never builds up another person or serves to strengthen a relationship. In fact, it's one way to almost certainly destroy or severely strain one.*



A caller from Connecticut suggests 1 Thessalonians 4:3,11: (NIV) *It is God's will that you should be sanctified (set apart) and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands.* The instruction is for us in this sanctification process to do three things: 1. Study to be quiet. 2. Do your work. 3. Mind your business. Remember just like mouthwash, "oral hygiene" is important!

Now it is time for a solution!

**James now begins to develop the solution for the rabid results of words spoken without true godliness:**

James 3:11-13: (NASB) <sup>11</sup>Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

**Look hard at your words - Are they a reflection of the desires of your spiritual heart?**

<sup>13</sup>Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.



Sometimes we are just not thinking, or we are too emotional. Perhaps there is too much stress in our lives and gossip is an outlet. But it is an outlet that leads to the sewer!

Try this: Stand in front of a mirror and repeat to yourself the gossip you just said about another. Do you want those words said about you? How do those words reflect your desire to be like Jesus?

**Look hard at your actions - Are they reflective of the gentleness of wisdom?**

What have I done as a result of those words? Gossip never fits the description of *gentleness of wisdom* quoted by James. It is never gentle nor wise and certainly never the two of those combined. The beginning of the solution for gossip is to look hard at your words and your actions.





## Jesus addresses the power of misused words right after he just spoke about blaspheming the Holy Spirit:

**Matthew 12:33-37:** (NASB) <sup>33</sup>Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup>You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. <sup>35</sup>The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. <sup>36</sup>But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment. <sup>37</sup>For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Gossip is judgmental and negative towards someone in relation to everybody else.

If we are saying and doing things unbecoming to true godliness, then how can we see ourselves as truly godly? To recognize this contradiction and NOT change is an even worse sin!

Ideally, we should go to the person we talked about and bravely ask for forgiveness. We then should go back to those we spoke to and tell them how wrong we were to gossip. This can begin the healing process and by these words, Jesus tells us we will be justified.

**Proverbs 11:12-13:** (KJV) <sup>12</sup>He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace. <sup>13</sup>A **talebearer <7400>** revealeth secrets but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

**Talebearer:** Strongs #7400 rakiyl (raw-keel'); a scandal-monger (as traveling about) KJV-- slander, carry tales, talebearer

A nice example of this is a husband and wife never pointing out each other's faults in public, as it is personal between them. They should protect each other's character. (This does not include sharing information in private to a trusted advisor, like a pastor, in order to get help.)

Even in the justice-based system of the Old Testament, the clear instruction was - no gossip!

### Is gossip always the result of dark and evil thinking?



A CQ App user comments: Do we need to talk negatively about others? Are positive comments about someone considered gossip?

If it is positive and true, no, it is not gossip. There is nothing wrong with building others up as long as it is true.



A CQ App user comments: Sociologists have called gossip a "social weapon," a harmful tool that some will use against others. Nicknames like "gossip hounds" are given to those.

**Gossip can be an expression of jealousy** - you really have had enough of that individual who seems to outshine you and seems to get what you want or think you deserve. You "expose" them with a story or two that is exaggerated, incomplete or none of anyone's business.





**6 - Ruins reputations, *Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time***

- *Sixth, gossip ruins reputations. Depending on your role in an organization or your age or perceived authority, what you say about others can carry a lot of weight, and when you gossip about a person it can have lasting and un-repairable repercussions. I've seen situations where gossip has destroyed careers or ministries and families. Think about what is truly at stake before you enter in gossiping conversations about others, and while you're at it, think about how you'd feel if the shoe was on the other foot.*

**James continues with the process that reveals the solution:**

James 3:14-16: (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.*



**Look hard at your heart - What fills it? Can you honestly and humbly see what is there?**

*<sup>15</sup>This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.*

**Label what you have seen - Label it clearly so there is no mistaking what the source is, because each of our hearts are driven either by the "wisdom" of Satan or the wisdom of God.**



Hebrews 4:14-16: (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

**It is a throne of grace for a reason - we can take heart in our frailty that we are understood. "I am broken; fix me." Bring your ungodly actions before God.**

**Gossip can be the result of carelessness and opportunity - carelessness because you overhear one end of a conversation and jump to conclusions. Opportunity because there is something in your own experience that causes self-doubt or insecurity, and this carelessly adopted story can conveniently mask that self-doubt.**

James 3:17-18: (NASB) *<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

**Claim heavenly attributes for your heart - if you truly claim them, your actions and your words will follow suit. Claim them with unrelenting sincerity.**

*<sup>18</sup>And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

**Plant that which you have claimed - to plant is a clear decision that requires desire, thought, planning and action.**

**Planting something is not an arbitrary experience. We must intentionally cultivate righteousness. It takes time, care and thoughtfulness.**





James finishes the verse-by-verse solution for rooting out our cold and heartless words. Even if our words are merely the result of careless thinking, they are in need of swift correction!

**Exodus 23:1-3:** (NRSV) *<sup>1</sup>You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness. <sup>2</sup>You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; <sup>3</sup>nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit.*

Be truthful, sincere and full of integrity. Stand for what is right. That is such a simple statement, but it is not easy. We often want to stand for what “feels” right. Violation of this commandment indicates a deep lack of respect for truth and for your neighbor.

To achieve a level of not bearing false witness can be a monumental task, because the terrain one must trek is not only slippery, but deceptive as well.

**How do we finalize our refusal to speak words of gossip?  
There is one more point!**



What would the difference be in our words if they were applied to us? This would change the “flavor” of our words. By changing the flavor, we change the content. By changing the content, we change the result - we can now glorify God in our words instead of following a demonic principle.

**The seriousness of watching our words is evident. Words are not only reflective of one’s condition of heart, they are also a predictor of potential action:**

**Hebrews 12:14-17:** (NASB) *<sup>14</sup>Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; <sup>16</sup>that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup>For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.*

If we make a habit of listening to or perpetuating gossip, we are planting something - a bitterness towards our fellow man. The fact you do not like someone does not give you the right to gossip about them. Use Jesus and the Apostles as our examples.



If our words are reflecting a dark condition of heart rather than a careless or reactive condition, the consequences will be necessarily difficult. But regardless of our reason why we gossiped, we still need to follow the "gossip solutions" laid out by James.

 **7 - Comes back to haunt, *Seven Reasons Gossip is Poison, Next Best Time***

- *Seventh, gossip will come back to haunt you. Author Paul Myers says, "Gossip is like a fired bullet - once you hear the sound, you can't take it back." Just recently a friend of mine went through great pains trying to reconcile a relationship with another friend over gossip and harsh words that were spoken years ago. The man who had said these hard things had been misinformed but he had passed that wrong information along to others not knowing it had made its way back to my friend. It was a pretty sticky situation.*



Based on all of James 3, cultivate and nurture godliness and be transformed in heart, mind and words. Leave gossip behind.

It is great to plant, but you will not get a good crop unless you cultivate and nurture godliness and peace. T-H-I-N-K before you speak.

Philippians 4:4-8: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

- If our rejoicing is truly in the Lord, our words will be provoked to reflect that rather than reflecting things that create damage and pain.

<sup>5</sup>Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.



- Be gentle of spirit - your words will fall in line with that gentleness. Gentleness does not know how to gossip. Gossip is an affront to others.

<sup>6</sup>*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

- Be prayerful and not overwrought regarding life. Telling God rather than others rarely leads to gossip!

<sup>7</sup>*And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- If God's peace guards your heart and mind, then your words can only come from a place that is sanctified - set apart for a holy purpose - no gossip lives there!

<sup>8</sup>*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

- Focus your thoughts on beauty and holiness. With such focus, the mere thought of gossip becomes a bitter and repulsive taste in your mouth.

**Proverbs 24:16:** (NASB) *For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.*

Just because we have reviewed how the Bible views gossip does not mean we will not make any mistakes along these lines tomorrow. The beauty of this is we can realize we have made a mistake and can get up and begin to walk again. As long as we ask for forgiveness with a repentant heart and attempt to be godly, eventually we will grow.



**A CQ App user comments: Is gossip a cover for not forgiving?**

Great question! It can be! *See our program, "Does God Really Forgive Me?" from September 12, 2016.* Forgiveness is not about releasing someone from their consequences; rather, it is about releasing us from what was done to us so it no longer holds us back. Gossip can be a result of our bitterness of having been wronged. It can be an excuse to not forgive. In that circumstance, we are hanging onto something that is making the problem even worse.

We need to understand the value of our thoughts and words. When we speak and listen, we want to be part of something better and rare - positive, godly thoughts, words and actions. We should have the courage to stand up and say, "I am not going to listen to that because nothing good will come of it." Gossip destroys us. We have a choice to be able to do the godly thing.

*Psssst!*





*So, does gossip really hurt anyone?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,  
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind*



*It is just as cowardly to judge an absent person as it is wicked to strike a defenseless one. Only the ignorant and narrow-minded gossip, for they speak of persons instead of things. - Lawrence G. Lovasik*

*Fire and swords are slow engines of destruction, compared to the tongue of a gossip.  
- Richard Steele*

*Isn't it kind of silly to think that tearing someone else down builds you up? - Sean Covey*

Proverbs 25:23: (ESV) *The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.*

1 Peter 3:8: (ESV) *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*

**More detail on the way the Jewish Law viewed speaking badly about others:**

Exodus 20:16: (KJV) *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

**The following is a scathing consequence of misrepresenting another:**

Deuteronomy 19:15-21: (NKJV) <sup>15</sup>*One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.* <sup>16</sup>*If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing,* <sup>17</sup>*then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.* <sup>18</sup>*And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother,* <sup>19</sup>*then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you.* <sup>20</sup>*And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.* <sup>21</sup>*Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

One of the biggest problems with gossip is that it is based on hearsay and not fact. You might say, well that is only in legal matters...yeah, so?

Leviticus 19:16: (KJV) *Thou shalt not go up and down as a **talebearer <7400>** among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the LORD.*

**Talebearer:** Strongs #7400 rakiyl (raw-keel'); a scandal-monger (as traveling about): KJV-- slander, carry tales, talebearer

Proverbs 11:12-13: (KJV) <sup>12</sup>*He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.* <sup>13</sup>*A **talebearer <7400>** revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*



Even in the justice-based system of the Old Testament, the clear instruction was - no gossip!

**Exodus 23:1-3:** (NRSV) <sup>1</sup>You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness. <sup>2</sup>You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; <sup>3</sup>nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit.

Violation of this commandment indicates a deep lack of respect for truth and your neighbor. To achieve a level of not bearing false witness can be a monumental task, for the terrain one must trek is not only slippery, but very deceptive as well.

**James 4:11-17:** (NASB) <sup>11</sup>Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. <sup>12</sup>There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? <sup>13</sup>Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. <sup>14</sup>Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup>Instead, you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that. <sup>16</sup>But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.



**Can you truly love someone if you gossip about them?**

**1 John 3:14-15:** (NASB) <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.