

If I Slander and Gossip, What Does That Say About Me?

James 1:26: (NASB) *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.*



It is a sad thing to say, but slander and gossip are easy. They are. Whether by spoken word or social media interaction, we are set up to say things, write things and imply things about others without recourse. For some reason, we think it is okay to slam those we do not like with twisted facts and partial truths. It is looked upon as cool or even clever to attack those whom we see as our opposition with innuendo and unverified stories. Wait a minute - we need to ask ourselves - do I consider myself to be a moral person? Am I a professed follower of Christ? Do I ever contribute to this mess by dishing it out OR receiving it? Let's face it, any participation

in this kind of slanderous and evil behavior is in no way and under no circumstances EVER justifiable for any Christian or moral person! How do we stop the madness?

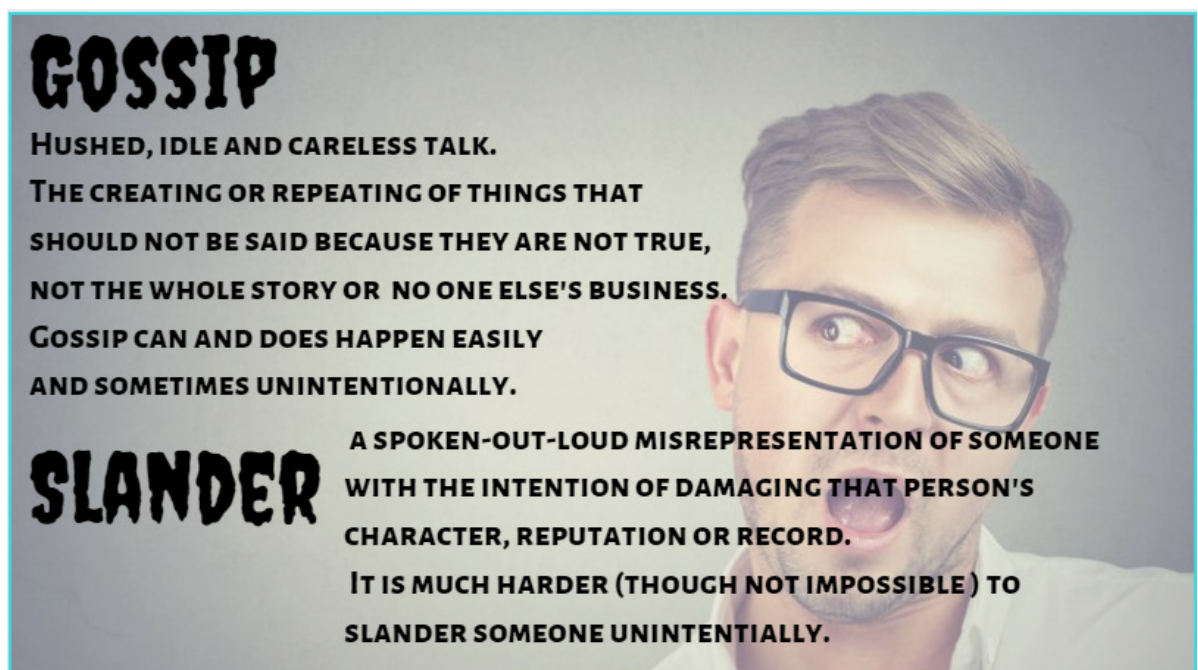
Gossips: Strong's #5588 *psithuristes*; a secret calumniator
King James Version - whisperer

Merriam Webster:

Calumny:

- 1) misrepresentation intended to harm another's reputation.
- 2) the act of uttering false charges or misrepresentations maliciously calculated to harm another's reputation

Slanderers: Strong's #2637 *katalalos*; talkative against, i.e. a slanderer
King James Version - backbiter



GOSSIP
HUSHED, IDLE AND CARELESS TALK.
THE CREATING OR REPEATING OF THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT BE SAID BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT TRUE, NOT THE WHOLE STORY OR NO ONE ELSE'S BUSINESS.
GOSSIP CAN AND DOES HAPPEN EASILY AND SOMETIMES UNINTENTIONALLY.

SLANDER
A SPOKEN-OUT-LOUD MISREPRESENTATION OF SOMEONE WITH THE INTENTION OF DAMAGING THAT PERSON'S CHARACTER, REPUTATION OR RECORD.
IT IS MUCH HARDER (THOUGH NOT IMPOSSIBLE) TO SLANDER SOMEONE UNINTENTIONALLY.



One of the best ways to talk about the trauma and damage that slander and gossip can bring is to tell a real-life story. We heard from a CQ listener who asked for this subject to be considered. She shared her own horrible experience of being one who slandered another and gave us permission to tell her story in hopes that it would help others not make the mistakes she did. (Disclosure - we do not know her personally but were touched by her desire to right her wrongs. We received her permission to rewrite her story a bit in order to protect her identity.)

The sin, *Evil Speaking*, a story from a CQ listener

- I've been a dedicated Christian for over 20 years. One day, a fellow Christian ("Person A"), with whom I have had a long and tumultuous relationship, wanted to privately discuss with my spouse and I what they thought were some of my character flaws. I KNOW they did this with the best of intentions. Person A wanted to point out that I am far too negative, and they felt this was something that needed work. They pointed out that such negativity can eventually burn out the brotherhood and even break apart the local group. Nobody would want to be around such a person! Well, I took this to mean "I am so negative I'm blowing up our local church!" Basically, if there was a way to take it wrong, I found it. I called a friend of mine from our local group ("Person B") and asked their opinion - should I leave the local church? They asked what brought this on, and I said that someone brought my negativity to my attention. Person B guessed Person A said this and wanted to know if that was correct. I answered, "Kinda." I expressed that I was dismayed and felt that I was being run out of the class by Person A. Well, this was the match that lit the raging fire. Person B interpreted this as Person A being so controlling that they were going to run people out of the church themselves, and they became paranoid that it would happen to them. So, doing what they thought best, they went to Person A's spouse to discuss it with them.*

Naming, assumptions, reactions - it is all here in this story.

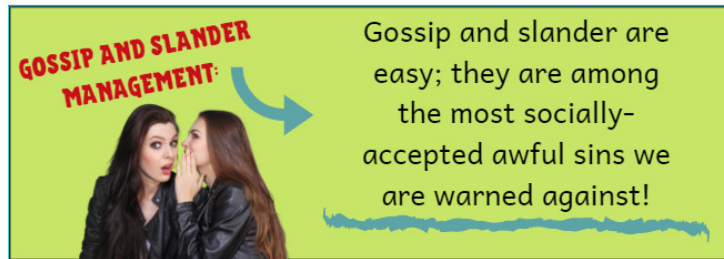
Gossip and slander are spoken of in Scripture and are NEVER seen in a positive light:

Romans 1:28-31: (NRSV) ²⁸And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God (the world walks away from God), God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. ²⁹They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are **gossips <5588>**, ³⁰**slanderers <2637>**, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, ³¹foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Gossips and slanderers are in the middle of this list!



In relating to this Scripture, our listener with the gossip experience said this: *This is a very scary place to be. Thankfully I can honestly say my heart never came near this, but if I kept on this road, this is likely where I would end up.*



A strong warning about any sin is how easy it is to commit.

**If slander and gossip are such bad things, why do we do them?
Is it just because it is fun or exciting?**

The human heart and mind in our present sinful state are NOT reliable guides for what is wholesome and what shoots holes through others' lives. It is far too easy to engage in slander and gossip, not only because of the self-satisfying rush it gives, but also *because of our natural need for recognition*.

Slander and gossip sound bad yet we engage in them ALL THE TIME. Are you ready to confront the truth?

(Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-quest-meaning/201406/gossip-or-not-gossip-is-the-question>) Gossip excludes. We love the feeling of belonging, and gossip is a powerful way of establishing an "us" - but at the exclusion of the "them."

It is important to be recognized but not at the expense of others.

 **The consequences, *Evil Speaking*, a story from a CQ listener**

- The next thing I knew, my spouse of over 25 years came home and exploded - "talking about divorce" kind of exploded. Apparently, Person A's spouse went to Person A, who called my spouse and indicated I was evil speaking all over the place and slandering their good name, and adversely affecting their service in the church. Half the things I was accused of quite frankly never entered my mind. But that's how my words were interpreted. What followed was extreme emotional pain, countless tears and despondency after reading that Jesus utterly condemned slander. I was inconsolable. Person B told Person A that I was just venting, not on some sort of an evil mission, but that didn't matter. Slander is slander. The Apostle Paul says, "Don't even eat with such a one..." I was openly shunned at services and not referred to as "Sister." A congregational hearing was mentioned. I was devastated...*

Sounds like maybe others did not handle things in the best way, but we should not care. Our listener cared that she started the problem. She had the humility to admit she messed up.

James puts our intellect on notice with his unmistakable observations regarding our words. The third chapter in his epistle is teaching us to be tongue-tied.



FIRST point: No one is exempt from speaking poisonous words:

James 3:1-10: (NASB) ¹Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. ²For 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.

(This is about pastors teaching the congregation, not teachers in a school.)
Higher aspiration has higher responsibility, and we all stumble.



SECOND point: Do not be deceived by the subtlety and seeming insignificance of the tongue:

³Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. ⁴Look 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. ⁵So 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!

We can easily rationalize. "Oh, it is just a story. I didn't mean to hurt anyone. You don't have to take this seriously." The little tongue has great power and can guide our entire lives. We can destroy the lives of others. Think about what we have power over or what has power over us.



THIRD point: The subtlety is the very thing that wreaks havoc! Think of Satan's simple and even soothing words, "Thou shalt not surely die."

What sounds inviting actually invites destruction:

⁶And 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).

What comes out of our mouth can be utterly destructive. The tongue is the little match that can set an entire forest on fire.

Our Christian friend, for an example, began a path of destruction.





FOURTH point: Left to the whim of human thinking and emotion, the tongue is murderous:

⁷For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. ⁸But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

We have the natural ability to be out of control by the words we speak.



FIFTH point: Especially for a Christian, controlling our words and their mission is one of the great contradictions of our lives:

⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; ¹⁰from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

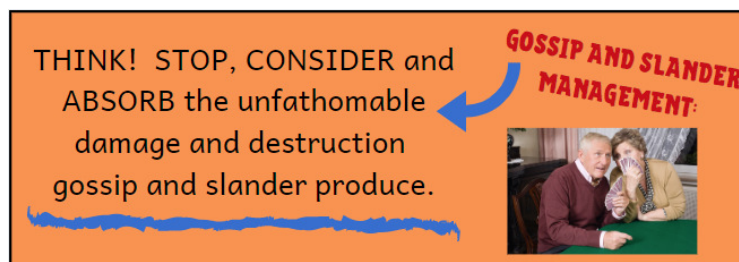
If we are not in control of our words to the glory of God, they are counterproductive to everything we stand for. Anyone - Christian or otherwise - who cares about the well-being of others should rise to this higher level of being in control of their words.

How can we be both a blessing and a curse to others? It should not be like this. We stand for something higher.

Jesus addresses the power of words right after he had just spoken about blaspheming the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 12:33-37: (NASB) *³³Either 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. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. ³⁵The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.*

James strongly warns us to watch our words. Jesus asks us, "What is your heart doing to feed those words?" *For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.* We have the power to build up and to destroy, simply by our words.



We must intellectually confront that we are wired to create damage and destruction by our words. In some ways, gossip and slander are like an addiction. Once we are in it, it feels natural, even if it is killing us.



Purifying our words can be an enormous mountain to climb. We think it out first...what is next?

Once we have *thought through and accepted* the incalculable damage our words can cause, we are then able to take clear steps forward. As with any issue in our lives, the problem of slander and evil speaking is at its core an issue of the heart. Purify the heart and begin to climb that mountain.



When I gossip about someone, does it mean I should welcome gossip about me in return? Isn't that fair? It is easy for us to tell half a story and twist it a little, but is that how we want people to talk about us?

(Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-quest-meaning/201406/gossip-or-not-gossip-is-the-question>) Gossip ruins reputations. A reputation is hard to build, but once broken it's even harder to repair. Gossip often happens without all the facts and reasons and circumstances, but with the authority of truth.



Broken pieces, *Evil Speaking*, a story from a CQ listener

- I had to get over the emotional turmoil before I could actively repent in a way that would show fruitage to both God and my Christian family. I prayed and prayed, and I apologized and apologized. In the weeks that followed, I enrolled myself in a behavioral therapy group to give me tools on how to get along and deal with people in an effective, non-offensive manner. I personally apologized to Person B twice and redeemed the character of Person A, and explained not only what I did wrong in the eyes of God but WHY it was wrong. I apologized to the spouse of Person A, who said they forgave me but has been cool toward me ever since. I've engaged in extensive Bible studies on evil speaking, slander, the fruits of the spirit, etc.*

She went to work! This shows a sense she knew she was broken and needed the tools. "I redeemed the character of Person A." She wanted to set it right by telling the person she gossiped to that Person A was good.

Proverbs 23:6-7: (NASB) *"Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, or desire his delicacies; ⁷for as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, Eat and drink! But his heart is not with you."*



Do my words reflect a selfish person who may look good on the outside but is hollow on the inside? This is what gossip is - hollow on the inside. It can also show weakness, jealousy or anger.

If we are going to say something about someone else, let it be to pass on a blessing or something good about them.

Remind yourself of the consequences - what Jesus himself says can be an end result for yourself:

Matthew 5:21-24: (NASB) *²¹You have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not commit murder and whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court. ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, You good-for-nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, You fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (Gehenna, total destruction.)*

For more about the topic of Gehenna, please search our archives for Episode 1024: "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible? (Part II)"



We know better! Once we feel the depth of consequence, let that knowledge provoke heart-driven action:

²³Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

This shows us sincerity before God and man. We need to be clear and sincere. First, we are to ask forgiveness from the person to whom we did evil. Then we are to pray for God's forgiveness.



If we do not do the first step, does it mean God will not forgive us? We will come back to this question.

CQ Team



Question

Tricia asks: What should this Christian woman have done differently?

At the very beginning, she shouldn't have talked about the other person. When Person B asked, "Is it so-and-so?" The appropriate response would have been, "That does not matter. What matters is, is there a problem with my character? What should I be doing about it?"

These next verses are a serious foundation level gut check:

Colossians 3:5-10: (NASB) ⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

Consider our earthly thinking as dead along with our earthly desires. It is idolatry, putting the created before the Creator.

The choice to be godly comes from the heart. Idolatry comes from the heart. Which will it be?

⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

Do we choose the godly heart or the earthly heart, which is pre-disposed to talk poorly about others?

Be very clear - idolatry brings God's anger. It always has and always will! Which do we choose?

⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, **slander<988>**, and **abusive speech <148>** from your mouth.

Slander: Strong's #988 *blasphemia*; vilification (especially against God)

Abusive speech: Strong's #148 *aischrologia*; vile conversation

Rephrasing these verses using the definitions might look like this:

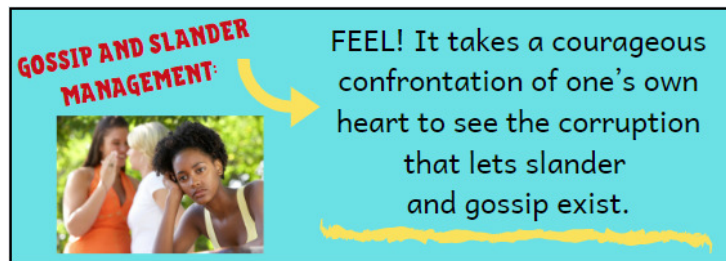
Before God granted you His grace you were lost in idolatry. You now know better as you reject your violent earthly desires, your passionate emotional reactions, the depravity of your sinful state, your scurrilous representations of others and your vile conversations.

Did I really reject these things or did I just say I did?

⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.



This can ONLY be accomplished if we have our heart longing for God and His blessing! If this is not what we are after, we are after the wrong things.

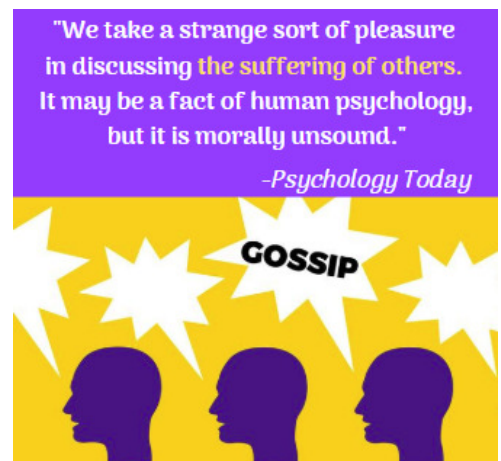


Gossip comes from the heart. We need to get our hearts and thinking right.

We have our head on straight and our heart lined up with God's will. How do we actually change?

There is never an exception to the rule of life that requires action and perseverance to make a change and keep that change in place. All of Christianity is built upon this. We are given God's grace and His Spirit, and then we are required to do the work so we can grow up into maturity in Christ. Build others up - do not tear them down.

What should we do in order to get out from under the enticing inclusion that gossip makes us feel?



Tricia asks: Is all gossip evil speaking? What if it is true?

If we are not building others up - even if it is 100 percent true, what is our motivation? Is it godly?



Hard reality, Evil Speaking, a story from a CQ listener

- I wrote an apology letter to Person A, detailing the situation and my repentance. It wasn't just an, "Oh, I'm sorry" letter. But I explained exactly what happened and what I did and what I am doing about it. A few days went by, and I received a scathing letter in return in which I saw judgment, emotion and fierce anger. They did not believe me. They said they were happy I'm in therapy but would be cool toward me for some time to come. They felt I wasn't truly repentant, because they thought I had not redeemed their character in the eyes of Person B. I was very surprised to hear that. I wrote a brief reply thanking them for their thoughts. I told them that I had already spoken to Person B twice redeeming their character and would happily speak to them again. I did. My spouse, who knows my heart and my repentance, eventually wrote Person A and assured them that I am indeed repentant. My spouse explained it is an active repentance, and I'm seeing Scriptures in a whole new light. As a result, Person A did eventually forgive me.*



She realized the damage she had done was so deep that she had to go back to work on it. This is the point we want to get to if necessary - having the personal humility that will go to any length possible to fix what we broke.

In the context of godliness with contentment is great gain, Paul further tells Timothy to take action:

1 Timothy 6:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.* ¹²*Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

And you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses - meaning when they were baptized to show the transformation to do God's will that took place in their hearts. This is an example of when the heart and actions are in line with one another towards godliness.

Actions speak louder than words. Our listener did the right things but they did not repair the damage at first. She had to go back a few times. It is hard to rebuild a reputation once it is broken.

Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵*Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.* ²⁶*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,* ²⁷*and do not give the devil an opportunity.*



Satan waits for our fleshly impulses that can be destructive to others. What does Satan gain? If he can trip up followers of Christ, that is his victory. If we are hurting others, we have allowed him to trip us up. We are acting in a satanic fashion.

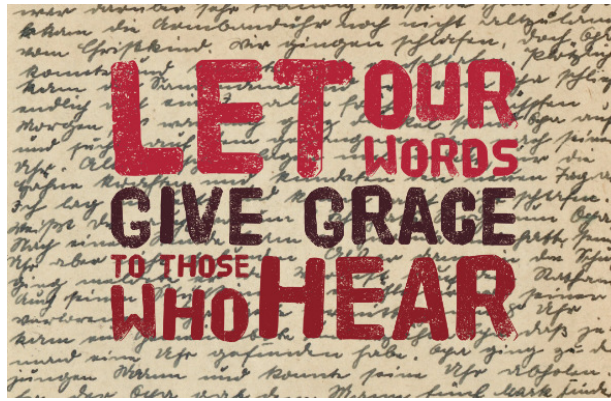
Speak to each other from the perspective of being eternally connected. This crushes Satan's hold. It is about taking action. *Lay aside falsehood* - laying something aside implies making a decision with the discipline to lay it aside.

How can we keep the perspective of being "eternally connected" so we do not mess up with our words? If we have an issue gossiping or slandering other Christians, we have to look at them from the perspective of the covering of Jesus. If we cannot, there is something wrong with our heart. It would mean we have a lot of work to do on ourselves and have no right to talk about anyone else. We should be asking God for the strength to stand up in righteousness and not in the folly of our own thinking.

Think first, feel second and then take action!

Decide what you want your communication to look like, sound like and accomplish:

Ephesians 4:29-32: (NASB) ²⁹*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.* ³⁰*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* ³¹*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and **slander** <988> be put away from you, along with all malice.* ³²*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*



If my words do not give grace to those who hear, they should not be spoken.

There is no greater action than self-discipline and control. Realize what Christlikeness looks like when we speak. Our feelings need to be driven by higher thinking so our actions can be in line with our heart's desire to be godly.

Another very powerful action we can take is depriving sin of anything to thrive upon. **Starve it:**

Proverbs 26:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. ²¹Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire. So is a contentious man to kindle strife. ²²The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

If we do not starve the slander it will end up feeding us. It becomes a source of dark energy, designed to burn out and not build up.

Actions, both for good and for bad, bring consequences. Paul here shows how deeply slander cuts:

1 Corinthians 5:11: (NASB) *But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler (abusive), or a drunkard, or a swindler - not even to eat with such a one.*




In contemplating this text, our listener said: *I made a seriously boneheaded mistake, but the Lord is showing me that this is far more than that; it's a very slippery slope that MUST be stopped.*

She was headed outside of her relationship with her Christian brothers and sisters, which is not where she wanted to be.

TAKE ACTION! The ONLY way we can ever put gossip and slander out of our lives is to **ACTIVELY REPEL IT** at all times and on all fronts. This takes courage, humility and grace!

GOSSIP AND SLANDER MANAGEMENT:



We can have both courage and humility, but if we do not rely on the grace of God, we will not get very far. We are not designed to overcome this by ourselves. This needs God's grace, the example of Jesus and our brotherhood.



Overcoming gossip and slander is an ever-present challenge. Is there light at the end of the tunnel?



It has been said that success is in the journey, and that is true in the battle against gossip and slander. We may go through experiences that teach us to not open our mouths to speak inappropriate words, but that does not mean we will not be within earshot of hearing them. Constant attention is required. We must also *not listen to gossip or slander*. When we listen to it, we give it life.

What does it look like after we fight through the humiliating experience of making right the wrong we did to another?

(Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-quest-meaning/201406/gossip-or-not-gossip-is-the-question>) Gossip pulls rank. Gossiping gives us a false sense of moral superiority. As Nietzsche points out, the feeling of rank is one of the most basic human instincts. To gossip about someone is a conscience decision to elevate ourselves above him or her.



Lessons learned, *Evil Speaking, a story from a CQ listener*

- The long and short of this is that I now see Scripture in a whole new way. If I were to put a Scripture to this event as it pertains to me, it would be: 1 Corinthians 11:31-32: (NASB) "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." I did not judge myself rightly in the past. I allowed evil speaking and negativity to reign unchecked, and it set the world on fire. Had I done what the Scriptures prescribed and repented daily and focused on "the little foxes that spoil the vine," I would not have needed to be disciplined by the Lord. A hard lesson learned. I continue daily in active repentance, using the tools and skills I'm learning to be a better person, and I rejoice that even though the experience was dreadful, the Lord IS working with me. An added blessing is that Person A is quite pleasant to me these days. Although our relationship is "Hello and Goodbye," they do refer to me as "Sister." I can only hope that their spouse comes around in time. Person B and I have put all of this behind us. My spouse and I have a wonderful marriage that neither one of us wanted to end. Our God loves a happy ending and has given one to this hard experience. I just know that I don't want to be that person ever again. I want to be pleasing to our Lord.*

Our Christian friend realized she allowed evil speaking in her life and should have judged herself appropriately. She is continuing to learn and grow.

What do we know about ourselves as a result of this powerful and life changing lesson?

James 1:19-22: (NASB) ¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear (we must be willing to listen first), slow to speak (we need to think and process before we form the words) and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore, (because you know this) putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls (we can only receive God's word if we put the other things aside). ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.



This was my failure, not applying these principles and not accounting every day and night to God to keep my righteousness in Christ pure. 'Deceiving your own selves.' A very bad trap to fall into!

She said long before she spoke those words, there were other things already in place. It is not just the words, but what brings us to the words that is important.

What do we know about ourselves regarding the reasons we are tried and tested so severely?

Hebrews 12:7: (NASB) *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

We have trials and are disciplined because God cares for us and loves us.



As with all dark cloudy experiences, God has provided a rainbow of hope. Yes, I did wrong. Very wrong. I was humbled and humiliated and very, very repentant, but it wasn't until after the strong emotion of this experience blew over that I came across this verse (Hebrews 12:7). And I rejoiced!

She saw this as a blessing from God to help her grow up in Christ.

(Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-quest-meaning/201406/gossip-or-not-gossip-is-the-question>) Gossip creates herd mentality. Gossip often leads to groupthink, which occurs when a group makes faulty decisions because of group pressures. This is where gossip really begins to take hold.



A powerful tool, Evil Speaking, a story from a CQ listener

- “What do you know?” - This is one tool I learned in behavioral therapy, and it's a tool that has immensely helped me NOT to evil surmise (which leads to evil speaking for me). It's called, “What do you know?” Example: You and I are in a room. I sit down, I'm wearing jeans and a sweatshirt, my hair in a sloppy bun, I'm talking to you, but I keep looking down and mumbling. What do you know? (Insert your observations here.) So, what do you KNOW? You know that I am wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, I'm sitting and I'm looking down and mumbling. That's ALL you know. You don't know if I want to be there or not. You don't know if I came from the gym or not. You don't know if I am having a bad day or just lost my dog, or what. You don't know anything except what you can see, hear, smell, taste and touch. You cannot read my thought bubble. Because you cannot see inside my head, you cannot reasonably assign motive to my actions. I find this helpful because that's what I'm notorious for thinking, “Oh, she's just being this,” or, “He's doing that because...” - evil surmising. Then when I voice it, it becomes evil speaking, and bingo - character assassination! Not good! Not good at all.



“You cannot read my thought bubble.” We can make a conclusion, but what do we really know? Only what we see, and what we see is not necessarily able to be interpreted until we know more. She also talked about evil thinking and surmising which happens inside of the heart and the mind, leading to evil speaking. What do we know? Not much unless we ask, listen and absorb what we heard and repeat back what we listened to.



What do we know? We know our actions towards others will influence God's responses to us:

Matthew 7:1-4: (NASB) ¹*Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ²For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, and behold, the log is in your own eye?*

This really sums up gossip and slander; evil judgments that come from a contaminated heart.

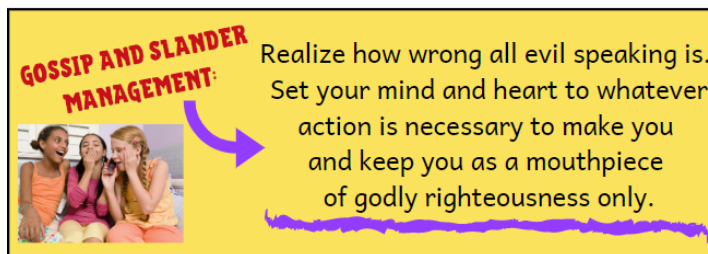
What do we know? We know what we owe to our brotherhood and to all:

Romans 13:8,10: (NASB) ⁸*Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law... ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

We need to give the type of love that is selfless, benevolent and giving and not worry about receiving love. Instead of speaking badly about someone, go to them and try to encourage them. Build them up instead of tearing them down.

What should we do with what we know?

1 Peter 2:1-2: (NASB) ¹*Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.*



We need to ask ourselves if we are speaking as Jesus' representative. If I am, what is the quality of my voice? Is it to build up, is it to bring others higher, or is it to destroy them? What would Jesus say?

*So, if I slander and gossip, what does that say about me?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on August 26, 2019:

Ep. #1088: Contradictions Part III:

Does God Contradict Himself?

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Bonus Material!

We should no less hate to tell, than to hear slander; if we cannot stop others' mouths, let us stop our own ears; the receiver is as bad as the thief. — Bishop Henshaw

To speak evil of any one, unless there is unequivocal proofs of their deserving it, is an injury for which there is no adequate reparation. — George Washington

You see, slander takes two. It takes a slanderer, and a willing listener. In fact to be really damaging, it takes a chain of slanderers who eagerly repeat and embellish the first slanders. If no one listens to slander and no one repeats it, slander dies and the damage it does is nullified. — Rebecca Hamilton

Slander slays three people: the speaker, the spoken to, and the spoken of. — Hebrew Proverb

The only thing more frustrating than slanderers is those foolish enough to listen to them. — Criss Jami

Some of the many other Scriptures referencing stumbling others and evil speaking in all of its forms:

2 Timothy 3:1-5: (NASB) ¹But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.



You'll notice the continuous 'avoid such as these' theme. This is contagious and an egregious sin.

Be aware of what a slanderous tongue and a self-centered heart turn you into in the sight of others:

Jude 1:12-13, 16: (NASB) ¹²These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; ¹³wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever... ¹⁶These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.



When God shows you in no uncertain terms that this very well could be you, if you have ears to hear you are GREATLY humbled and troubled!! Speechless! It's humiliating.

Matthew 18:4-10: (NASB) ⁴Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹If your eye causes you to stumble pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. ¹⁰See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of my Father who is in heaven.



God pays close attention to EVERYTHING in our lives, no detail is too small. You do NOT want to be that person - trust me!

2 Corinthians 12:20: (NIV) *For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.*

Exodus 23:1: (NIV) *Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness.*

James 1:26: (NIV) *Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.*

James 4:11: (NIV) *Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.*

Leviticus 19:16: (NIV) *Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.*

Proverbs 10:18: (NIV) *Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool.*

Proverbs 10:19: (NIV) *Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.*

Proverbs 11:9: (NIV) *With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors, but through knowledge the righteous escape.*

Proverbs 11:13: (NIV) *A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.*

Proverbs 16:28: (NIV) *A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.*

Proverbs 17:9: (NIV) *Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*

Proverbs 18:21: (NIV) *The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*

Proverbs 20:19: (NIV) *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.*

Psalms 34:13: (NIV) *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.*

Psalms 41:7: (NIV) *All my enemies whisper together against me; they imagine the worst for me, saying...*

Psalms 141:3: (NIV) *Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.*

Proverbs 18:6-7: (NIV) ⁶*The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating.*
⁷*The mouths of fools are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives.*

1 Timothy 5:13-14: (NIV) ¹³*Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.* ¹⁴*So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.*

1 Timothy 3:9-11: (NIV) ⁹*They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.* ¹⁰*They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them*



serve as deacons. ¹¹In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

Titus 2:2-5: (NIV) ²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. ³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:11: (ESV) And to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you.

2 Thessalonians 3:11: (ESV) For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.

1 Peter 4:15: (ESV) But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

Proverbs 24:2: (ESV) For their hearts devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble.

(Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-quest-meaning/201406/gossip-or-not-gossip-is-the-question>) A few more excerpts from the article: So should we gossip or not?

Gossip can bond us, protects us, make us feel good, create intimacy—but ask yourself:

- Do you trust those who speak about others?
- Do you admire those who exclude others?
- Do you respect those who feel superior to others?
- Do you esteem those who delight in others' suffering?
- Do you want to follow those who follow a herd mentality?

The way we talk about others can have a tremendous moral force - not only on our character and development but within the society around us.

If you think of your conversation as act of morality - a morality that brings us together to help one another and not cause harm, when you ask yourself whether gossip is okay the simple answer is: probably not.

As the old aphorism says, strong minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; weak minds discuss people.

The Quest for Meaning: We should live our lives representing who we are and treating others as we would wish to be treated.

