

GOSSIP



***Defend
The
Gospel
Tracts***

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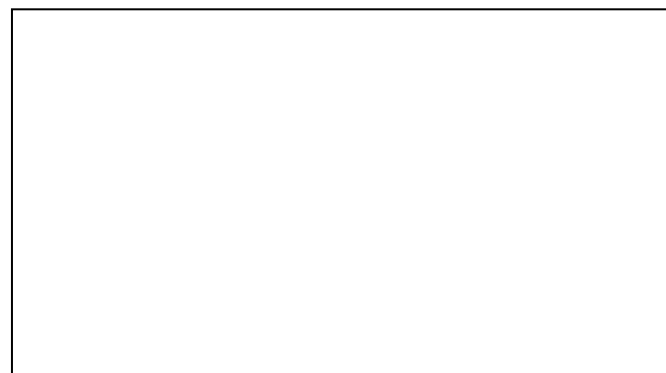
INTRODUCTION

The word gossip is defined by the world book dictionary as, “idle talk, not always true, about other people and their affairs.” The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as “Trivial talk, often involving personal or sensational rumors. One who habitually engages in gossip.” Webster defines it as “idle, often malicious talk; a person who spreads sensational or intimate facts.” The word does not appear in the Bible in some translations, although there are some words which do appear that mean or describe the same thing. Romans 1:29 mentions those who are “whisperers.” This word comes from the Greek word *psithuristes* which is defined as “a gossip, talebearer.” There is also the word found in 2 Corinthians 12:20 *psithurismos* which is defined “a gossip, slanderer.” So, there are other words which describe the sin of gossiping and the sin of being a gossip.

I want to point out in this tract that gossip is a Damnable Debilitative. Damnable, meaning it is something that damns souls. It is a destructive sin. And debilitative, meaning it is a sin which debilitates and breaks down things, especially characters and relationships. It is a damnable debilitative.

As a damnable debilitative, Gossip, in the

This Tract Presented By



first place, is a:

I. DEADLY DESTROYER

Gossip IS A DESTROYER OF SOULS.

It is a destroyer of souls because it will cause some folks to go to eternal punishment. It is a condemned sin in the word of God and those who partake in it will certainly lose their souls. Even to the Jews, God said in Lev. 19:16, *“You shall not go out as a tale bearer among your people.”*

Consider Romans chapter 1. Paul is talking here about those who had been rejected by God.

- God gave them up! Vs. 24
- God gave them up! Vs. 26
- God gave them over! Vs. 28.

Found among the list of things which caused God to turn His back on them is *“whisperers”* (vs. 29), and *“backbiters”* (vs. 30). Both of these words describe the character of gossip. Gossip is a deadly destroyer. It will cause God to turn His back on you; to reject you; to sentence you to the eternal pit of flames.

Gossip isn't only a Destroyer of the souls

of those gossiping, it can be a destroyer of the souls of its victims. Younger and older preachers alike have quit preaching because they've had their characters defamed by gossip. Some elders have stepped down because of it. And because of the positions and work of elders and preachers, they are really more likely to be gossiped about. Some Christians have left the church because of the humiliation brought on them due to gossip. Some people have allowed gossips to destroy their friendships with dear friends. We must not allow this to happen to us. We can not let the gossip win. We've got to ignore these crazy rumors, lies, and spreaders of slander. We've got to pick up the pieces and move on with the work of the Lord. Someone once said that even the moon could not go on shining if it paid any attention to the little dogs that bark at it.

Beware of this deadly destroyer. How many of us truly obey the command "*speaking evil of no man*" (Titus 3:1, 2)? James 4:11 says, "*Do not speak evil of one another brethren.*" Is this not a command on par with repent and be baptized? Are we not also obligated to fulfill this command to its fullest extent, just as those who are not Christians are obligated to fulfill the command to be baptized? Is one command not as binding as the other? Let us put this deadly

"Gossip, large or small, is a tool of destruction that frustrates, depresses and paralyzes." Let's beware of this deadly sin, and avoid it at all cost. The Bible says in Psalm 14:1, "*The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.*" But, the Bible also says in Proverbs 10:18, "*And whoever spreads slander is a fool.*"

say something like, “Look Bill, the Lord has taught me through His word and through my experiences in life that all of us seem to have this sense of wanting to talk about other people’s failures and shortcomings. I’ve been praying about this and trying to do better, so, if it’s alright with you, Can we change the subject?” But, whatever you do, don’t listen to gossip! If you do, you may find yourself gossiping before it’s all over with. If you listen, you get emeshed, you have to start contributing sooner or later. And before you realize it, you yourself are going in for the kill. It’s kind of like telling jokes; you have to top the last one.

It takes two to gossip, and even if you’re not a professional gossip, you can be lured in if you allow yourself to listen to it. One person said, “Unless you are not able to overlook idle gossip, you will always be busy with unnecessary trouble.” Dolly Madison said, “Never desire a knowledge of other people’s business.” As Christians, let’s recognize gossip for what it really is. Gossip is a damnable debilitating. And as a damnable debilitating it is a...

- Deadly destroyer...
- A Deadly divider...
- And a Deadly deceiver.

destroyer out of our lives...

- No backbiting!
- No slander!
- No Gossip!
- No rumors!
- For no reason!
- Under no circumstances!

Bury that old man deep in the ground, and let the new man in Christ, with all of his sweet encouraging words, rise to life. Jesus said in Matt 12:37, “***For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.***” Gossip, as a damnable debilitating, is not only a Deadly destroyer, it is also a...

II. DEADLY DIVIDER

Gossip is a deadly divider of friendships. “***The tongue of the just is as choice silver***” (Proverbs 10:20). “***A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver***” (Proverbs 25:11). But, “***he who repeats a matter separates friends***” (Proverbs 17:9). Ah, how true this is. How many loving friendships have been destroyed because of this deadly divider, because of this horrible sin of gossip? Proverbs 16:28 says, “***A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.***” A

true friend and a true Christian is someone who goes around saying good things about you behind your back, not bad things.

Not only is gossip a deadly divider of friendships, it is also a deadly divider of churches. The same principle that applies to the division of friendships, also applies here, because our brethren are our closest of friends. Gossip is one of those things which are hard to retrieve back. Once the deadly thing is said, it's out there. You may repent and get forgiveness, but too often the damage is already done. Once the bullet leaves the barrel of the gun, you can't cram it back in. And that bullet will not stop until it hits something, causing irreparable damage all too often. The story is told about a young man gossiping in church. After telling a few people something slanderous about some of the members, enormous trouble ensued. As a result, age long friendships were ripped apart. Arguments broke out like wildfire. Accusations were made against innocent people. And the church was broke apart over the matter. Realizing what he had done, the young man felt very bad. He visited the preacher at the building one day, and asked him if there was anything he could do to make things right again. The preacher grabbed a pillow and led the young man up to the church steeple. The preacher then

It is wise to keep your mouth shut around those who you recognize as professional gossips. In fact, it's wise to limit the time you spend around them altogether. Proverbs 20:19 says, in the New Revised Standard version, "***A gossip reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a babbler.***" The NIV says, "***A gossip betrays a confidence, so avoid a man who talks too much.***" Paul addresses those who are professional gossips in 2 Thessalonians 3:11, 12. "***For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.***"

Then there are the non-professional (amateur) gossips. This is the category that many of us fall into from time to time. These don't go out digging for gossip, but they always welcome a tasty morsel when it comes along. Did you know it takes two for gossip to occur? It takes a mouth and an ear. So my advice to you is this: When someone approaches you with a piece of gossip (they may approach you by starting out with one of the phrases we mentioned above, or they may just go right into the gossip) stop them! Don't even listen to it. This can be done in a tactful way. You might

gossip. They make it their business to just look for things to tell others about others; things to spread about. And these people are clever. You may not be one who generally gossips, but these professionals have a way of getting the information out of you. They use some of these techniques we've been talking about, especially the one about "concern," because this one taps into your caring emotions. And now they've got you gossiping under the guise of, "Yes, I too am concerned about so-and so."

These professional gossips are the ones addressed in 1 Timothy 5:13 who learn to go about from house to house and become gossips and busybodies meddling into other people's affairs. But, it's not just widows who become professional gossips. There are some so-called big name preachers who do this. They go from one church to another spreading all the bad things they've heard about people in one church to the people in the other. They're supposed to be preaching the gospel and building up, but instead they are preaching gossip and tearing down churches, relationships and characters. I don't care how good of a preacher they are or how knowledgeable they are or how much good work they've done. If they think God isn't going to hold them accountable for their gossip, they'd better think again.

opened the window, ripped apart the pillow, and sent countless feathers out the window into wind. The feathers spread everywhere! They showered over the town below, into the lake, and on housetops. The preacher then told the young man, "Go and collect every single one of those feathers from the biggest to the smallest." Naturally, the young man saw the impossibility of such a task. The same is true with gossip. Once you let the slanderous poison loose, you may repent and receive forgiveness, but think of the harm you've caused which all too often can't be repaired. Gossip will absolutely tear a church apart; Men and women spreading these horrible things about the ones they are commanded to love. Jesus commanded in John 13:34, 35 that we love one another. But, gossip is one of the strongest manifestations of hatred and loveless-ness.

- It will drive wedges between God's people.
- It will build fences.
- It will create hard feelings.
- And it must be avoided at all costs!

Gossip is not only a deadly divider of friendships and churches, but it's just a social divider altogether. Regardless of how pleasurable and pleasing it may seem, gossip is a social sewage, a veritable cess pool, filled with

toxic wastes and deadly poisons. Gossip, which many deceived Christians consider to be insignificant, is as disastrous as termites in the rafters, a crack in the dam, or a lighted cigarette in the dry forest. Gossip, tale bearing, evil speaking or backbiting shatters friendships, ruins marriages, breaks hearts, and threatens to destroy the influence of truth and of the church of our age.

As a damnable debilitating, not only is gossip a...

- Deadly Destroyer, and a...
- Deadly Divider, It is also a....

III. DEADLY DECEIVER

Gossip deceives us into taking part in it because it's one of those sins which comes upon us in disguise. We don't always recognize it. So, good people get caught up in it if they're not careful and watchful. The story is told of a restaurant which would set apart a large section for no smoking for the regular large church crowd that would come in on Sunday afternoons. When asked about it by another customer, the waiter said, "it may be a no smoking section but you can sure smell the

rejoices in the truth."

8) There's one more justification which deserves mentioning because it is sometimes used to slander and defame. Sometimes someone will say something they ought not about someone else, and then say, "**I was just kidding.**" "Oh, just kidding, just kidding." "I didn't mean that." Yeah, right! You didn't mean that. Many a truth has been spoken in jest. If you're just kidding and you really didn't mean it, don't say it because it damages, hurts and harms.

These are all things we say and use in order to try and justify our gossip. But none of them justify. Gossip can never be justified regardless of how we tell it or what we say before or after it. Gossip is gossip and it destroys!

As a Damnable Debilitative...

- Gossip is a Deadly Destroyer...
- Gossip is a Deadly Divider...
- Gossip is a Deadly Deceiver!

CONCLUSION:

There are really two types of gossips.

1. The professional gossips.
2. The non-professional gossips.

The professional gossips are the ones who go around digging and looking for bits of

day. Jan said, “Millie told me that you told her that secret that I told you not to tell.” Mary said, “Millie’s so mean, I told her not to tell you that I told her.” Jan said, “Well, I told her that I wouldn’t tell you that she told me that you told her, so don’t tell her I told you ok?” See how these things work? Before you know it, Mary and Jan and Millie and a host of others are all mad at each other because of one damaging thing said in confidence to one best friend. The old maxim is true, “Plant a little gossip, and you will reap a harvest of regret.” *“But whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles”* (Proverbs 21:23). Remember the words of Proverbs 20:19? *“He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets.”*

7) **“I probably shouldn’t say this, but this is too good not to share.”** We gossip because something is just too good not to share? Isn’t all gossip too good not to share? If we can justify any gossip at all with this excuse, we can justify it all because all gossip is like tasty trifles (Proverbs 26:22). Name for me one piece of gossip you didn’t enjoy hearing and that you wouldn’t enjoy passing along. This is a ridiculous way to try and justify gossip. I don’t care how good it is you are supposed to love your brother. And Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:6 that *“Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but*

smoke of those people’s tongues from slandering others. What we need is not a ‘no smoking’ section, but a ‘no gossiping’ section.” Someone once said, “Half the evil in the world is gossip started by good people.” And what’s worse, we often use certain things to justify it in our minds. As if we can somehow gossip in such a way as to where it’s not really gossip.

Consider **8** ways by which we justify our gossip:

1) **“It’s True.”** All too often we think we can slander, backbite and defame characters, simply because it’s true. Those who are gossiping because of this reason are under the deception that something has to be false before its considered gossip. And we hear statements like, “This is true so I can tell you.” No you can’t! Listen, Gossip doesn’t have to be false to be evil, poisonous, and slanderous. There are some true things which don’t need to be spread around. I would almost say that we should keep it under our hat especially because it’s true because it could have a more damaging effect on someone’s character. Whoever said something had to be false before it was considered gossip? Listen to what the Bible says: *“A talebearer reveals secrets”* (Proverbs 11:13). The talebearer here is the one gossiping. Secrets are unveiled truths. Therefore, the Bible

here speaks poorly of those who spread slanderous truths. Proverbs 20:19 says, ***“He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets.”*** One cannot justify gossip based on the fact that the information passed along is true. He is only going to cause strife and discord among friends, family, and church members.

2) **“I’ve already spoken to them about it.”** So what? Does this now give you the right to defame his character? Does this now give you the right to slander his name? Jesus spoke of how to deal with those in sin (Matthew 18:15-20; John 17:3), and dealing with a sinning brother or sister does not include gossiping about them. ***“He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends”*** (Proverbs 17:9).

3) **“They’re kin to me, so I can say this about them.”** No you can’t! Whoever told you that? The bible simply condemns gossip. It never says exceptions are made for relatives.

4) **The praise, slander method.** “I really love so-and-so...But.” “So-and-so is such a good person...But.” So many of us would be so much better off if we would just leave that “but” off. It’s almost as if the fact that we said something good about someone now gives us the right to slander, defame, and destroy their character. It doesn’t! Ah, how true the words of James in

James 3:10, ***“Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.”***

5) **“I’m so concerned about so-and-so.”** Or, “We need to pray for so-and-so.” Then, out comes the slanderous poison. And people’s characters are destroyed under the guise of concern. “Even with the use of pious platitudes under the guise of love one may engage in tale bearing which is malicious and destructive.” In fact, the backbiter is more efficient and effective when disguised as an angel of light.

6) **“I can tell you because I know you won’t tell anyone else.”** As if we only have a right to practice gossip in the presence of our best, closest, and dearest friends. Not only are you taking a big chance on your trust in them, but you are putting them in an uncomfortable situation by placing before them the temptation to spread it around. And they’re likely to give in to this temptation. Because, as Proverbs 26:22 says, ***“The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles.”*** They are Tasty, delightful little sweet cakes, and much of the pleasure in gossip comes from sharing it with others because it almost gives you, the news giver, a feeling of importance. You have no right to gossip to your best friend, even if you tell them not to, or think they won’t tell. Two young girls, best friends, Jan and Mary, met each other on the street one