

DEALING WITH GOSSIP

My Big Fat Mouth: Part 3

May 15, 2022

WHAT GOSSIP IS

GOSSIP IS TALKING ABOUT PERSONAL CONTENT WITH A MALICIOUS INTENT.

WHY GOSSIP IS SO STINKIN' FUN

1. IT MAKES US FEEL IMPORTANT.

"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts." (Proverbs 18:8, NIV)

2. IT SHIFTS THE FOCUS OFF OF OURSELVES.

"Evil people relish malicious conversation; the ears of liars itch for dirty gossip." (Proverbs 17:4, The Message)

3. IT IS A PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE WEAPON.

"...Diotrephes likes to be the number-one leader, and he won't pay any attention to us. So if I come, I will remind him of how he has been attacking us with gossip..." (3 John 9–10, CEV)

WHAT GOSSIP DOES

1. DAMAGES YOUR REPUTATION.

"Don't tell your secrets to a gossip unless you want them broadcast to the world." (Proverbs 20:19, The Living Bible)

2. CREATES RELATIONAL DISTANCE.

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

3. DESTROYS UNITY.

"[The LORD hates]...someone who stirs up trouble among friends." (Proverbs 6:19, GNB)

HOW TO BE A GOSSIP CHAIN BREAKER

"Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, those who follow Jesus have better uses for language than that..." (Ephesians 5:4, The Message)

1. COMMIT TO BE TRUSTWORTHY.

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

2. PRACTICE BIBLICAL RECONCILIATION.

"When you and someone else can't get along, don't gossip about it." (Proverbs 25:9, CEV)

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE HURTS YOU

- Vent VERTICALLY.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6–7, NLT)

- Dialogue DIRECTLY.

"If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend." (Matthew 18:15, The Message)

3. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRAYER REQUEST AND A GOSSIP FEST.

"Don't bad-mouth your leaders, not even under your breath...Loose talk has a way of getting picked up and spread around. Little birds drop the crumbs of your gossip far and wide." (Ecclesiastes 10:20, The Message)

4. CONFRONT AND REDIRECT GOSSIP.

"Don't spread gossip and rumors. Don't just stand by when your neighbor's life is in danger. I am GOD." (Leviticus 19:16, The Message)

- SHUT IT DOWN

"If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them." (Titus 3:10, NLT)

*"I feel uncomfortable with this conversation."
"I wonder how X would feel about this conversation."*

- TURN IT AROUND

"Where there is no fuel a fire goes out; where there is no gossip arguments come to an end." (Proverbs 26:20, CEV)

"Have you spoken to X about this?"

PRAYER:

Father, I realize that not all sin is created equal. Some sins spread like wildfire. Gossip is one of those sins. I confess that it's a sin that I have not taken serious enough. Please forgive me.

Forgive me for when I have spoken maliciously behind someone's back.
Forgive me when I have talked about someone instead of talking to them.
Forgive me for tearing others down in an attempt to build myself up.
Forgive me for passively standing by while others were gossiping.

I realize that I have wounded so many with my words. There are so many things I wish I could take back, but I can't. All I have is today and from this day forward. So, therefore,

I commit to HATE gossip the way you do.
I commit to be a person of trust and confidentiality.
I commit to deal with my offenses biblically.
I commit to be a CHAIN-BREAKER.
I commit to confront gossip.

Help me to work on this daily knowing that I will fail, but give me the tenacity to never give up or give in. Thank you for loving me enough to help me. In Jesus' name, amen.

ACTION STEPS:

Recommit to a No-Gossip Pledge with your Small Group.
Is there someone I need to stop talking about and go talk to?
Is there someone I need to apologize to?