

# CORRUPTED FRUIT - PART 3

REV. RYAN FRENCH

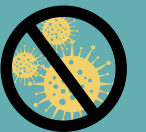


## MATTHEW 7:13-23, JESUS SPEAKING IN PARABLES

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. 21 Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.


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## MATTHEW 12:33-37, JESUS SPEAKING TO SPIRITUALLY DISEASED PHARISEES

**33** Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. **34** O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. **35** A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. **36** But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. **37** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

 **EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTED FRUIT: IDLE WORDS (UNDISCIPLINED, OBSCENITY, CARELESS, FOOLISH TALK, RUDENESS, COURSE JOKING, GODLESS CHATTER, FALSE KNOWLEDGE, GOSSIP, SLANDERING, LYING, DECEITFUL CONVERSATION).**

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# GOSSIP DEFINED

Gossip hurts neighbors, divides friends, and damages reputations and relationships. The Bible labels gossips as untrustworthy and meddling (Proverbs 11:13; 20:19; 26:20; 1 Timothy 5:13) — and even as worthy of death (Romans 1:29, 32). The Scriptures do not provide a definition of gossip in one location. Instead, they describe gossip in action and intimately tie it to the character of the people participating in this tantalizing sin. The Bible often uses the word gossip to describe a kind of person more than just a pattern of communication. My way of summarizing the Bible's teaching on this topic is to say that the sin of gossip is bearing bad news behind someone's back out of a bad heart. This functional definition considers the action itself, the content of the corrupt communication, the situation in which it occurs, and perhaps most importantly, the motivations of the people involved. Bearing Bad News Gossip is the opposite of the gospel. In the mouth and the ear of a gossip is a morsel of bad news, not the good news.

This bad news — a story of someone else's sin or shame — can be bad in at least two ways. 1) Bad information: The story may be false, and if you know that beforehand, then spreading it is not just gossip but slander (Leviticus 19:16; Psalm 15:3; Proverbs 19:5). Or you might only think the story is true (perhaps without good reason), but it turns out to be wrong — hearsay, a rumor, a half-truth (Proverbs 18:13, 17). “The sin of gossip is bearing bad news behind someone's back out of a bad heart.” 2) Bad news about someone: You might have been taught that “if it's true, it's not gossip.” But needlessly sharing shameful truths about someone else can be gossip. One biblical phrase for this kind of speech is “a bad report,” such as what Joseph brought against his brothers (Genesis 37:2). Just because someone actually did something wrong does not mean that we need to, or get to, talk about it with others. Other times, we might spread a wicked story of what might soon happen to someone else. So, in the back of your mind, when any conversation begins to steer toward the topic of other people, you can ask yourself, “Is this story true? How do I know?” “Is this story mine to tell? Is it his to tell me?” “Is this story bad news?”

A gossip bears this bad news behind his victim's back. By definition, gossip occurs only when the subject of the story is not present. It is much easier and more interesting to discuss others when they are not around. Gossip is clandestine, hidden, furtive, stealthy, sly (Proverbs 25:23; Psalm 101:4–5). The English Standard Version often names a gossip as “a whisperer,” which emphasizes the secretive nature of this sin (Proverbs 16:28; 18:8; 26:20, 22). Sometimes, you can catch yourself gossiping when you suddenly lower your voice, look around to see who might be listening and step closer to your friend before speaking. We might ask ourselves in such moments, “Would I be telling this story if he were here? Why or why not?” Am I hiding this conversation from anyone? Am I ashamed of it?” “Would I want someone else to talk this way about me if I were not in this room?”

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## GALATIANS 5:13-25, ESV, CORRUPTED FRUIT & SPIRITUAL FRUIT

13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

“Now, in the morning, as Jesus returned to the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently, the fig tree withered away (Matthew 21:18-19).”

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