

## Why Do We Gossip 04-07-19 AM

I. What is Gossip? The word "gossip" is not often used in the bible. Instead we apply the term to multiple types of communication that are mentioned in the bible

In the Old Testament we see the following terms:<sup>1</sup>

A. Backbiter –

1. Ragal - "One who goes about maliciously as a slanderer, one who speaks maliciously about another." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament). Psalm 15:1-3
2. Sether - "A secret slanderer, or hidden gossip, one of a sly tongue." Prov. 25:23

B. Slanderer

1. Dibbah - "Whispering, defamation, evil report, to spread a rumor, to slander." Prov. 10:18
2. Lashan - "To use the tongue boldly (evil sense);, to slander, to backbite." Psalm 101:5

C. Talebearer

1. Nirgan - "Wrong speech (evil secret) hence; a whisperer, a backbiter, a gossip." Prov. 18:8
2. Rakil - "A slanderer, defamer, detractor." Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; 20:19

D. Whisperer

1. The Hebrew word "Nirgan"; "a backbiter, a talebearer, a gossip." Prov. 16:28
2. Thus, in the KJV there are four English words translated from six Hebrew words.

In the New Testament we find these terms:

A. Whisperer

1. psithurismos (psithurismos) - "Lit., to speak into one's ear (in an evil sense); hence, secret slander, backbiting." (Thayer's and Vine's Lexicons). Used only in 2 Cor. 12:20; Rom. 1:29-30

B. Backbite

1. katalalos (katalalos) - "To slander, to speak evil of, to backbite; synonymous to whisperer, only more open." Again, used only in 2 Cor. 12:20; Rom. 1:29-30.

C. Busybody

1. periergazomia (periergazomia) - "Lit., to be working round about, instead of at one's own business (peri, "around," ergazomia "working"); signifies, to take more pains than enough about a thing, to waste one's labor, to be meddling with or bustling about other people's matters." 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:11-15

D. Meddler

1. allotrioepiskapos (allotrioepiskapos) - "Lit., another's overseer; an overseer of the business belonging to another, a busybody." 1 Pet. 4:15 - "Meddler in other men's matters" all from this one word.

E. Prating

1. phluareo (phluareo) - "To bring unjustified charges against, malicious gossip, unfounded rumors." 3 John 10

F. Tattler

1. phluaros (phluaros) - "The adjective of phluareo (prating), and means: to prat against another; to raise false accusations; to gossip about another." 1 Tim. 5:13

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<sup>1</sup> Old Testament and New Testament terms are from GOSSIP, BACKBITING, SLANDER By David Riggs and John Cripps, oakridgechurch.com

## II. Why is it evil?

Gossip can include lying. However, much of what falls under gossip is true. Does this mean we are not permitted to talk about others? Of course this cannot be true; we see many examples of this in the New Testament, where writers discussed (both positively and negatively) others. Yet we must deduce in some fashion that these correspondences were fundamentally different.

The evil of Gossip is in multiple parts. First, it is the evil intents of the heart that make speech gossip. That evil is manifested in wanting to put others down, either to ourselves or to others. We are speaking without love and often lying to ourselves as to our intent.

Second, it is in the disobedience to God. Jesus said that if a brother sins against us, we are commanded to take it to them first (Matthew 18:15-18). If they sinned and repented, we must forgive them (Colossian 3:13). If we are judging our brothers unfairly, we are condemned ourselves (Romans 14:10). Gossip is a direct violation of these laws of Christ.

## III. Are you a Gossip? If so, why?

Sometimes we still gossip because we don't understand what gossip is. Some might say "*If it is true then it is not gossip*". But consider Ham in Genesis 9:22. He was cursed for telling the truth about his father's condition, but in some way doing so that failed to seek the best for his father. It may be too that we think that it is necessary to "warn" others; but the love in 1 Corinthians 13:7 obligates us to believe and hope all things for others. Some see themselves as just venting. This can be determined easily enough; Is it a factual declaration ("this happened") or is it (subtly or overtly) seeking to influence another person's opinion? Secondly, in venting, am I willing to hear advice?

Sometimes we do it because we have a heart condition that we are unaware of. A sin-sick heart will seek to put down others because it makes us feel better. A sin-sick heart wants to gossip because it makes us feel like we are in the "know"; we enjoy the attention it gets and the prestige (pride of life) it provides. Finally, a sin-sick heart wants to deflect attention from ourselves and our own problems.

## IV. Take Control of Your Tongue

It is hard to take control of gossip. In part, it is because it is not always clear what gossip is, and it is deceptive when we do it. We must learn to bridle our tongue.

*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.* James 3:2