

# Sins of the Tongue -- Gossip

## Introduction: Everyone recognizes gossip that is wrong.

### A. A poem about gossip is called “Remember Me?”

*My name is gossip. I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age. I flourish at every level of society.*

*My victims are helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face. To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.*

*I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never quite the same.*

*My name is gossip. —author unknown*

### B. A statement about gossip is called “Nobody’s Friend”.

*My name is gossip. I have no respect for justice.*

*I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives.*

*I am cunning and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed.*

*I flourish at every level of society. My victims are helpless.*

*They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face.*

*To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become.*

*I am nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same.*

*I topple governments and wreck marriages. I ruin careers and cause sleepless nights, heartache, and indigestion.*

*I spawn suspicion and generate grief. I make innocent people cry on their pillows.*

*Even my name hisses. I am called gossip, party gossip, telephone gossip, and don't forget church gossip.*

*I make headlines and headaches.*

*Before you repeat a story, ask yourself, Is it true? Is it fair? Is it necessary?*

*If not, **SHUT UP**. —again the author is unknown*

### C. A story about gossip is, “The Three Gates”.

*If you are tempted to reveal a tale to you someone has told about another, make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold.*

*These narrow gates: First, "Is it true?" Then, "Is it needful?" In your mind give truthful answer. And the next is last and narrowest, "Is it kind?"*

*And if to reach your lips at last it passes through the these gateways three, then you may tell the tale, nor fear what the results of speech may be. —from 'The Arabian'.*

### D. Today we will consider ‘gossip’ as a ‘sin of the tongue’.

1. Almost everyone recognizes that gossip is wrong. Yet it is still a very common sin. Probably everyone has done it and does do it sometime.
2. It is such a common sin that preachers, elders, presidents, adults, children and everyone else does it.
3. Since it is so common and so serious, we must examine ourselves to be sure we are not doing it.

## I. What is gossip

### A. The dictionary says gossip is;

1. **Conversation about personal matters:** conversation about personal or intimate rumors or facts, especially when malicious;

2. **Casual conversation:** informal and chatty conversation or writing about recent and often personal events;
3. **Habitual talker:** somebody given to spreading personal or intimate information about other people; —Microsoft® Encarta® Dictionary
4. A gossip is someone who spreads rumors or tells things about people that should not be told.
5. A gossip may seek to make their self look more important by telling intimate details about others. Or they may seek to harm the reputation of others. They may use fact or fiction to do this.

B. The O.T. had much to say about gossip and tale-bearing.

1. *Psa 41:7 All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt.*
2. *Prov 16:28 A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.*
3. *Lev 19:16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor. I am Jehovah."*
4. *Prov 11:13 A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.*
5. *Prov 18:8 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body.*
6. *Prov 20:19 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.*
7. *Prov 26:20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.*
8. The O.T. does not use the word *gossip*. However it speaks of whisperers and tale-bearers. These are the same thing. Someone has said that the best way to get someone to believe something is to whisper it.
9. The tale-bearer does not always lie. He may tell the truth. However there are some things that need to be kept private. Revealing secret things can cause trouble.

C. The N.T. also has much to say about this sin.

1. *1 Tim 5:13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.*
2. Paul is talking about young widows here. They should not be supported by the church —vs 9–11. They need to marry and manage a home and not give the adversaries of the church a chance to speak against the church —vs 13, 14.
3. *Rom 1:28-30 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...*
4. This describes the world of Paul's day. It was a world that had rejected God. It was a terrible place in many ways. In this list of terrible sins is whisperers and backbiters, those who gossip.
5. *2 Cor 12:20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults...*
6. *2 Thess 3:11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.*
7. These two verses describe the church. Worldliness has invaded God's people. They are no longer set apart and holy. They are jealous and selfish and angry and therefore behave the way the world does.
8. *1 Pet 4:15-16 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.*
9. Here Peter is instructing Christians about their behavior in the world. They need to be lights and good examples —Matt 5:16. They must not be gossips and busybodies.

D. Gossip is a serious sin and we must realize it is something we must strive to avoid.

## II. Examples of Gossip

A. There are times we need to tell things and times we shouldn't.

1. *Eccl 3:7 A time to tear, And a time to sew; A time to keep silence, And a time to speak;*
2. *Prov 12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.*
3. There are some things that we should not tell, even though they are true. Sometimes a gossip tries to excuse himself by saying, "Its all true." However this does not make gossip and tale-bearing right.
4. *Mark 7:35-36 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.*

B. Lets consider some examples of those who should have kept silent.

1. When Saul decided to kill David, he had to get away quickly. He asked a priest, Ahimelech, to help supply him. However he did not tell Ahimelech why. Ahimelech helped him and another servant of Saul was there.
2. *1 Sam 21:7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.*
3. *1 Sam 22:9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.*
4. *1 Sam 22:18 And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod.*
5. *1 Sam 22:22 So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house.*
6. Doeg tells Saul and the priests are killed, even though they did not know David was running from Saul. Doeg told the truth, to his own advantage. However he did not have to volunteer the information.
7. David wrote about this event in Psalm 52. He did not say it was alright to tell because it was true. David expected Jehovah to punish Doeg for what he said and did.
8. *Psa 52:2-5 Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. 3 You love evil more than good, Lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah 4 You love all devouring words, You deceitful tongue. 5 God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah*
9. Jesus sometimes wanted things kept silent. He had His reasons. Jesus never did anything wrong. Yet He still had enemies. Some who carried tales to His enemies told the truth. Yet they led to His death.
10. *John 11:45-47 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.*
11. Jesus' miracles were one reason His enemies killed Him. Some knew the Pharisees hated Him and ran to tell what they knew. Their motivation was not to help Jesus.

C. Now lets see some who told what they knew and should have.

1. *Ruth 2:10-12 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" 11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12 The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."*
2. People had told Boaz about Ruth. They did not gossip but praised her devotion and integrity. They told the truth in love. They did her good with their words.
3. *1 Sam 2:22-23 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people.*
4. The sons of Eli would think they were gossiped about. However they were doing evil in front of the people and needed to repent. They were dishonoring the worship of God. They needed to be told on.
5. If the people only complained among themselves it would be gossip. Yet they went to the right person with their problem. We shouldn't just complain about certain things but go to the right person and deal with it.

6. *Acts 23:16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.*
7. Paul's nephew told him of the plot of the Jews to kill him. This was not gossip. It was done to save his life. It was done to keep wicked men from doing a wicked act. It should have been told.

D. We see how important it is to think about what we're saying & why so we don't gossip.

### III. Rules to keep from gossiping

A. At the beginning we saw three rules for telling something.

1. They are 1) is it true, 2) is it needful and 3) is it kind. These are the three narrow gates every thought must pass through for us to say it.
2. *'Is it true?'* This is simple. We must always tell the truth. If we tell something that is not true it is wrong regardless of other circumstances.
3. *Exod 20:16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."*
4. *'Is it needful?'* Are we trying to do good by what we are telling? Does the one we are telling something about someone really need to know what we are telling?
5. Gossip is casually spreading personal or intimate information about someone. Why does someone need to know what we are saying?
6. *Matt 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother."*
7. We have seen that Jesus did not want everything told that He did —Mark 7:35-36. He probably did not want to just be known as a miracle worker. Or He did not want the Jewish leaders to seek to kill Him yet.
8. There are many true things we can tell that can give people the wrong impression about someone. We must be very careful not to do this.

B. Question three is, *'Is it kind?'*

1. This is very important. This question involves our motivation or reason for telling something.
2. Why do we tell something about someone? Is it to help them or hurt them? Why we do and say something can make it right or wrong.
3. *Eph 4:15 ...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ;*
4. *Col 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*
5. We need to speak the truth in love. We need to salt our speech so it tastes better when others hear it. We need to be motivated by love in all we say and do.
6. However this does not mean we never criticize nor condemn. Sometimes we need to do this. However it must be done carefully and be motivated by love.
7. *Psa 141:5 Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.*
8. David did not want to always be praised. He considered it a kindness to be rebuked by the righteous. Notice though that the righteous tell him and not his neighbor.
9. *Lev 19:16-17 "You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. 17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him."*
10. Here we see a warning against gossip. However we also see a command to rebuke our neighbor if he is wrong. This cannot be done in hate or we will be guilty of sin. Again we see we go to our neighbor.
11. Motivation or why we tell something is very important. It must be done in love and kindness or it is wrong.

C. David tells us the kind of person we must be in Psalm 15.

1. *LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?*
2. *He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;*
3. *He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;*

- 4 *In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*
  - 5 *He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.*
- Our speech is an important part of our behavior. It tells men a lot about us.

D. We see three important rules to follow before we speak.

## **Conclusion; We all know gossip is wrong.**

- A. But what are we doing about it? Do we gossip? Do we listen to it?
- B. All of us need to become children of God.
  1. We must believe, repent and be baptized.
  2. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*