

UNDERSTANDING GOSSIPS

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Gossip is idle talk; discussing other people's affairs especially unconfirmed and wrong reports.

Wikipedia defines Gossip as "idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others."

Encarta dictionary defines gossip as "a conversation about the personal details of other people's lives, whether rumour or fact, especially when malicious." "Informal conversation or writing about recent and often personal events." "To spread rumors or tell people the personal details of others' lives, especially maliciously."

Oxford dictionary defines Gossip as "casual conversation or unsubstantiated reports about other people."

A gossip or gossiper is a person who likes talking about other people's private lives.

A gossip (gossiper) is a busybody who is always interested in other people's affairs.

A gossip is a tale bearer, rumour monger and slanderer.

To slander is to damage other people's name (reputation) through spreading of damaging stories or reports that are false.

To slander is to bear false witness against another that damages the person's reputation.

Gossiping is a terribly bad habit that hurts many, strains and kills relationships, brings confusion, division and stress on a family, organization, church and nation. Gossips hurt so badly that some people cannot handle the pressures it puts on their lives. Some have responded to it with resignation from their work, relocation from their community, separation from friends and family, bitterness and enmity with offenders (those who believed and acted based on the gossip and perceived source of rumour), depression leading to loneliness, isolation, mental illness and suicide.

Gossip breeds lots of quarrels and fights in families, amongst friends, in churches, religious and secular organizations. It pitches people against one another. It separates very good and close friends. Gossip puts serious strains on marriages and family life. It brings division and break of marriages and families. It is deadly. Gossips can set a whole community on an evil fire. It is an evil that must be abandoned by all who practice it. It should be abandoned by those who gossip, encourage gossip and work with gossips.

Many people encourage gossips through their wrong attitude to it. Requesting for information about other people that doesn't concern you is encouraging gossip. Asking another to always report to you what people are saying about you is encouraging gossip. Working with gossip without giving the person being spoken about the opportunity to defend him or her is encouraging gossip. Entertaining damaging stories about other people from those who gossip is encouraging gossip. Shunning gossipers will stop them from gossiping to you. Refusing to share what you have been told by another will help stop the gossip or rumour.

The scripture on gossip

1. Gossip breeds and fuels quarrels and makes it difficult for quarrels to die down and be truly and permanently settled.

Prov 26:20

20 Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.

NIV

2. A lie, false statement, false rumour, true stories or reports about someone's words, actions, and associations can stir up quarrels, fights, divisions and separation.

Prov 16:28

28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

NIV

3. A man or woman who cannot keep secrets is a gossip and a betrayer of his or her friend. Letting out information entrusted to you by a friend or loved one to another sparking a fire that will nearly consume your friend is evil.

Prov 11:13

13 A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.

NIV

4. When one talks too much, he will certainly gossip and reveal secrets committed to him by a friend or loved one. When you know someone talks too much, keep your secrets away from him. Whatever you don't want another to hear, never tell to such.

Prov 20:19

19 A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.

NIV

5. The words of a gossip penetrate into man so deeply that it affects him terribly.

Prov 18:8

8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.

NIV

- It is well packaged and arranged to be believed, so it is believable.
- It stirs anger, sometimes as quickly as it is heard.
- It whips up negative emotions and sentiments.
- It sets a man on fire.
- It stirs a response in words and actions almost immediately.

6. Gossips are perverse, mischievous and wicked in heart. They seem to enjoy sowing seeds of discontent, division, quarrels, separation and divorce. They don't seem to care about the damage their words and actions cause others.

Prov 16:28

28 A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

NIV

The Character of the Gossip

Prov 26:22-26

22 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts. 23 Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. 24 A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit. 25 Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for

seven abominations fill his heart. 26 His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

NIV

- Gossips have an evil heart.
- Gossips are liars, malicious and deceivers.
- He has an evil intent (agenda) that is hidden and only known to him, God and the devil instigating him. He is like a con man.
- He pretends to be a friend or family member and care and love you but has a different agenda. He harbours deceit in his heart.
- His stories may be born out of envy or bitterness, but pretends to care.
- Gossips will always be exposed at the end of the day.

How to stop a gossip and gossipers

1. Shun a gossip when he or she comes to gossip to you. Tell the person you are not interested in what doesn't concern you and you don't want to be a partaker in another man's sins or need a curse on your life.
2. Rebuke and stop anyone attempting to gossip to you.
3. Walk away from a person or group when they start gossiping another person or organization.
4. One of the ways of exposing and stopping gossip is by insisting that the person being gossiped be present so the person can tell his story or make his accusation in his presence. Most times, they will not agree, but, when they agree, they may refuse to show up on the agreed date and time for the meeting.
5. Always insist on verifying all stories before taking any action. Never take a negative action based on a gossip or rumour. Verify every story.
6. Refuse to share what others shared with you in confidence.
7. Refuse to spread an evil report that is brought to you. Let it die with you. Seal your lips about it no matter the temptation to share.

Conclusion

Gossiping is part of the old life we are told to drop, and we must do that because it really hurts others including the ones we love and those that love us. Even the Church of Jesus Christ gets hurt too. The new life of Jesus Christ does not include gossiping. So stop it.

Gal 5:16-17

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

NIV