

# “Idle Talk” or Gossip

## Introduction

1. Have you ever heard someone say: **“Can you keep a secret?”**
  - A. When I hear those words it gives me an uneasy feeling inside.
  - B. I'd like to think that I can keep a secret - but I am also concerned that the one telling me was not able to keep a secret entrusted to them.
    - 1) “Idle Talk”  
**1 Timothy 1:6**
2. People often love to tell or hear something new.
  - A. It is because of this desire that many become guilty of the sin of "gossip".
3. Luke describes the Athenians and strangers who visited Athens during Paul's visit as people who spent

Acts 17:21 .....their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

## **Telling or Hearing Something New Can Be Good or Bad:**

### **GOOD:**

- 1. Telling others the good news of Jesus Christ is good.**
- 2. Relaying joyful news about others is good.**

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- 3. Sad news can also be a good thing to tell others.**
  - A. This helps brethren be aware of a physical or spiritual need.**
    - 1) This may not always be something we enjoy passing along but it is sometimes necessary.**

### **BAD:**

- 1. News of a personal nature or that does not concern all the brethren does not need to be told.**
  - A. Some believe that everything they know about somebody, everyone else should also know. Telling anything that....**
    - 1) Is not validated and/or**
    - 2) The individual does not have a need to know**
  - B. They enjoy "hearing and telling some new thing".**
- 2. This is known as "gossip".**

## The Sin of Gossip

1. **Gossip is defined as: "idle talk, not always true about people and their affairs".**
  - A. It is extremely dangerous (like children playing with matches). When one talks to another about his dislikes or opinions about someone then it puts another in an uneasy position. **(The Listener)**
  
2. **Gossip is a sin which will cause one to experience the second death if it is not repented of.**  
**Romans 1:29-32**
  - A. One who likes to gossip does not have the love of the brethren in their best interest.
    - 1) They are grouped with all those other unrighteous qualities of life.
  
  - B. Notice verse 32: Paul says - They know God's ordinances, yet those that practice gossip also give hearty approval to others that do so.
    - 1) We must be careful then not to receive gossip from others!
  
  - C. Paul was afraid he would find "gossip" a problem at Corinth when he visited there.

2 Corinthians 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;

- 1) **All these sins that Paul mentions seem to go right along with gossip.**
  
- D. **Paul rebukes those who are idle and are guilty of gossip.**  
**1 Timothy 5:13**

3. **Participating in gossip is often times easy to do.**
  - A. **We try to justify our actions with the reason that we are trying to help.**
    - 1) **And we may be. But telling people who are not involved and will not likely help the situation can only lead to trouble.**
  - B. **Before relating news to others, we would be smart to ask ourselves these questions:**
    - 1) **Will it build up the body of Christ?**
    - 2) **Will it promote peace and harmony in the church?**
    - 3) **Is it really necessary to tell?**
    - 4) **Will it help the person being told and the person that it is about?**
    - 5) **Are we sure it is the truth?**
4. **We will be responsible for every careless word we render.**  
**Matthew 12:36-37**
  - A. **The reason is explained in the two verses preceding these.**  
**Matthew 12:34-35**
    - 1) **Gossip is a sin that can be forgiven by God but the consequences can be as far reaching as a forest destroyed by fire from just one match.**

## Strive to Build up Not Tear Down

1. Striving to maintain peace and harmony is required of each Christian.
  - A. This is not always possible to maintain but we are responsible for trying!  
**Philippians 2:1-2**  
**Ephesians 4:1-3**
  - B. If our words are words of gossip then our heart is not pure and clean as it ought to be.
  - C. If on the other hand, our words are uplifting, helpful, and true, then our heart is in the right condition.
2. THINK, THINK, THINK before speaking.
  - A. Even if what we are about to say is true, is it something that others who are not involved need to know?
  - B. We must learn to bridle our tongue.

James 1:26 If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and **does not bridle his tongue** but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

- C. Most of us have been the subject of gossip at one time or another in our lives - it is not pleasant.
  - 1) Let us all remember to watch over our heart in all that we do:  
**Proverbs 4:23-24**
  - 2) If we will put into practice the "golden rule" of **Matthew 7:12 AND Philippians 2:3-4**, we will not be guilty of this terrible sin.  
**Matthew 7:12**  
**Philippians 2:3-4**

## Conclusion

1. **Gossip is a sin that can come upon one suddenly.**
  - A. **When you least expect it, you may soon be engaging in gossip.**
  - B. **As soon as other people start entering your conversation, be careful. Your conversation can lean towards gossip in no time!**
2. **We all need to heed the words of the apostle Paul that he wrote to the Thessalonian brethren:**

1 Thessalonians 4:11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,
3. **Let us all concentrate on encouraging and building up one another. Nobody benefits from gossip!**



# The Tragedy of Gossip

Author Unknown

The story is told of the woman who became conscious stricken because of her gossiping ways. She went to the preacher, confessed her sin of spreading malicious rumors about her neighbors; and after the preacher prayed with her for God's forgiveness, she asked what could she do to repair the damage she'd done.

The preacher handed her a bag of feathers, took her to the roof of the building, and had her empty the feathers into the wind. Looking into her astonished face, the preacher then said, "I want you to go into the city and return to me every one of those feathers."

"Why...that's impossible," said the woman, "the wind has scattered the feathers to who knows where. I'll never be able to find them all."

"I know," nodded the preacher. "Now perhaps you can see how utterly impossible it will be for you to undo the damage performed by your wagging tongue. Even though God has forgiven you, the harm you've done cannot ever be totally undone."