

Gossip - Deadly Poison

Text : **James 3: 7-12 ; Lev. 19: 13-18**

A. We've been at war in the Middle East since 2001.

S#1.
S#2.

1. 2.6 Million soldiers have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan.
2. 48% of our soldiers have been deployed once.
3. 24.5 % have served multiple deployments.
4. Average deployments vary depending on one's job and branch of service.
 - a. Marines average only 7 months, but redeploy quickly.
 - b. Army deployments average 9 months.
 - c. Airforce deployments are only 4 to 5 months, but frequent.
5. 6,600 soldiers have died in those wars. (*Many self-destruct after returning home.*)

B. Christians are permanently deployed as part of the army of God.

1. Sacrifice is required. We're instructed to suffer hardship as a good soldier of Christ.
II Tim. 2: 3 – Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. S#3.
2. We are told not to entangle ourselves with worldly possessions and enterprises.
II Tim. 2: 4 – No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.
3. We are warned that our enemy is more powerful than any earthly enemy.
Eph. 6: 10-12 – Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. S#4.
11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
4. This powerful enemy is both savage and relentless.
I Pet. 5: 8 – Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. S#5.
5. Our adversary is a close quarter fighter who destroys from within.
 - a. **James 3: 6, 8 – And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. 7... 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.**
 - b. **II Cor. 12: 20 – For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;** S#6.

Man's tongue often tends to be Satan's most successful weapons against Christians and against God's church. S#7.

Satan's most effective use of man's tongue is gossip so let's study it.

I. What is gossip ? S#8.

A. Word defined.

1. Cambridge Dictionary : Talk about other people's private lives.
2. Merriam-Webster : Rumor or report of an intimate nature

B. The person or act of gossiping.

1. Webster : a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others
2. Google : casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.
3. Practical , Biblical : Someone who betrays confidences and/or distributes private information regarding other people. S#9.
 - a. A person who spreads negative information against another ... even if it's true.
 - b. One who spreads things needlessly just because they are true.
 - c. **Prov. 11: 13 – He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.**

C. “Four Way Test” is what you are about to say : S#10.

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

II. Gossip is a very dangerous sin. S#11.

A. Gossip is made even more dangerous because people regard it lightly.

1. Psychologist estimate that 60% of conversations between adults contain some gossip
2. Most people assume gossip to be normal and admit to having done it at some time.
3. Many think a little gossip is okay as long as the intent is not malicious.
4. While researching for this lesson I found articles advocating the benefits of gossip.

B. God views all gossip as sin. S#12.

1. Gossip is condemned more than **50 times** in scripture.

2. Gossip was forbidden under the Law of Moses.
Lev. 19: 16 – You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.
3. The scriptures list gossip as a depravity to which God gives over the wicked.
Rom. 1: 28-32 – And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **S#13.** God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, **29** being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient **S#14.** to parents, **31** without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; **32** and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. **S#15.**
 - a. Notice what accompanies gossip in the list : **murderers, haters of God, unloving**
 - b. Those who practice gossip are worthy of death ... eternal separation from God.
4. As followers of God, we must avoid contact with gossips.
Prov. 20: 19 – He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip. (*notice : gossip = slanderer*)

III. Knowing it is evil, why do so many people gossip. **S#16.**

- A. Some people just generally talk too much.
 1. **Prov. 10: 19** – When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, **S#17.**
 But he who restrains his lips is wise.
 2. Those of us who struggle with this have an abundance of company; many are guilty.
- B. Some people take pleasure in stirring stuff up. **S#18.**
 1. **Prov. 26: 20-21** – For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. **21** Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.
 2. Such a person is an enemy of the church and must be expelled.
Tit. 3: 10-11 – Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, **11** knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.
- C. Some gossip out of jealousy. **S#19.**
 1. **Acts 13: 45** – But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were slandering him
 2. **Dan. 6: 3-4** – Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.
4 Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of

accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him

D. Some gossip because they have too much idle time. S#20.

1. **II Thes. 3: 11** – For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.
2. We're warned not to support young widows or they will become gossips.
 - a. **I Tim. 5: 13** – At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.
 - b. Today there is no need to go house-to-house; we have phones.

E. Some gossip out of a desire to be accepted. S#21.

1. In an attempt to be interesting, they develop a “*Can you top that?*” attitude.
2. **Prov. 29: 25** – The fear of man brings a snare,
But he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.

IV. Gossip brings about negative consequences. S#22.

A. Gossip destroys one's soul, i.e., separates one from God.

1. **Prov. 18: 7** – A fool's mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul. S#23.
2. God inspired David to say He will judge those who gossip.
Psa. 101: 5 – Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy;
No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.
3. If one wants to dwell with God he must refrain from gossip.
Psa. 15: 3 – He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor,
Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; (*Not repeat what others say*)

B. Gossip creates deep wounds that may never heal.

1. Matthew warns against causing one who is young in the faith to stumble.
Matt. 18: 6 – but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. S#24.
2. **Prov. 18:8** – The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,
And they go down into the innermost parts of the body. (*wounds heart*)

C. Gossip destroys relationships. S#25.

1. **Prov. 16: 28** – A perverse man spreads strife,
And a slanderer separates intimate friends.
2. I've known marriages to be destroyed by revealing secrets from the bedroom.

D. Gossip destroys the reputations of both the victims and the perpetrators. S#26.

1. It destroys the reputation of the victim even if it is later proven to be in error.
2. The reputation of gossiper is destroyed ... negative backbiter, can't keep trust

Prov. 11: 13 – He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.

3. Gossip destroys the Christian's ability to influence others to accept Christ. S#27.**E. Gossip causes strife in the church S#28.**

1. **Prov. 20: 19** – He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets,
Therefore do not associate with a gossip.

2. **Prov. 16: 28** – A perverse man spreads strife,
And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

3. This is why the elders are required to put a contentious person out of the fellowship of the church. S#29.

a. **Tit. 3: 10-11** – Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, **11** knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

b. **Rom. 16: 17** – Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

V. What are some solutions or remedies to prevent gossip? S#30.

- A. One must repent and ask God for forgiveness, but the damage can't be repaired.

* *Illustration of the feathers distributed on doorsteps.* S#31.

- B. Memorize some of the relevant verses, especially the proverbs. S#32.

Psa. 119: 11 – Your word have I treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.

- C. Learn to think before speaking.

- D. Strive for and pray for a transformed heart. S#33.

1. **Matt. 12: 34b** – For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

2. A heart filled with love is the mark of a true Christian.

a. **Matt. 22: 37-42** ... The greatest of all commands is to love.

b. **John 13: 34-35** ... Love is the distinguishing mark of a true Christian.

INVITATION :

S#34. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :

James 3: 7-12

7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. **8** But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; **10** from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. **11** Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Leviticus 19: 13-18

13 ' You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning. **14** 'You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.

15 “You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. **16** You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.

17 You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. **18** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.”