

GOSSIP

I. Various words used in Scripture.

- A. Hebrew word *rakil*
Lev. 19:16 - "you shall not go about as a slanderer"
Prov. 11:13 - "he who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets"
Prov. 20:19 - "he who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets"
Jere. 6:28 - "rebellious, going about as a talebearer"
Jere. 9:4 - "goes about as a slanderer"
- B. Greek word *psithurismos* - "to whisper" - psst
Rom. 1:29 - filled with unrighteousness, full of deceit, gossips, slanderers"
II Cor. 12:20 - "slanderers, gossip..."
- C. Greek word *phluarus* - "to babble"
I Tim. 5:13 - "gossips and busybodies"
- D. Greek word *diabolos* - "to throw through, to slander"
I Tim. 3:11 - "malicious gossips"
II Tim. 3:3 - "malicious gossips"
Titus 2:3 - "malicious gossips"

II. Defining gossip.

- A. To spread secrets or rumors - Prov. 11:13; 20:19
- B. False accusations, slander
- C. To reveal personal facts about another.
 - 1. "Did you know...?" "Have you heard...?"
 - 2. What information about others is legitimately passed on to others?

III. Biblical evaluation of gossip.

- A. Antithesis of righteousness - Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:9; Rom. 1:29
- B. Antithesis of faithfulness - Prov. 11:13
- C. Product of corrupt mind - Rom. 1:28
- D. Used by wicked people - Jere. 6:28
- E. Stirs up trouble - Jere. 9:4
- F. Breaks relationships - Prov. 11:9; 16:28
- G. Causes anger - Prov. 25:23
- H. Epidemic among those who do not know God -
Rom. 1:28-32; II Cor. 12:20; II Tim. 3:3
- I. Gossip is sin - diabolic - contrary to character of God
 - 1. ego-enhancing - tear others down to build self up
 - 2. comparison

IV. Gossip in the midst of Christian community.

- A. Violates and dissipates "community of trust" in Body of Christ.
- B. Destructive, divisive
- C. Done subtly under pretense of prayer requests
- D. Church discipline sometimes necessary

V. Avoiding gossip.

- A. Love does not act unbecomingly - I Cor. 13:5
- B. Choose your mind-set - Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:2
 - 1. Old saying:
 - "Simple people talk about other people.
 - Average people talk about things.
 - Wise people talk about ideas."
- C. Do not say anything about another person that you would not be willing to say directly.
- D. How should we respond when someone begins to gossip?
 - 1. Don't participate
 - 2. Avoid - Prov. 20:19
 - 3. Change subject
 - 4. Confront

VI. Practical considerations of passing information about another.

- A. Letters of recommendation.
- B. Preaching illustrations.
- C. Counseling confidentiality.
- D. Those in positions of authority.