

The Old Paths

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“Avoid Gossip And Slander” (#1)

Jarrold Jacobs

One of the sins God frequently warns us about is sinning in our speech. In the book of James we learn that sinning in our speech (or with the tongue) “defiles the whole body” (Jas. 3:6). He goes on to say that it “ought not be” that the same tongue that blesses God will then curse men, the creation of God (Jas. 3:9-10). Some 1000 years before Christ came to this earth, David said, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3). These, and many other similar passages in the Old and New Testaments place a premium on folks controlling their speech, and speaking only what is true and right. Peter told the Christians scattered throughout different parts of the world, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (I Pet. 4:11a). In other words, the words of our mouth need to reflect the very utterances of God! Would God gossip and slander others? Of course, not. Did Christ gossip and slander others while He was upon this earth? He did no such thing! Then, let us, the disciples of Christ (Jn. 8:31-32), avoid gossip and slander!

Defining Our Terms

Many folks get themselves into trouble because they use words for which they do not have the definition, and as a result, use those words in a wrong way. In order to appreciate what it is to gossip and slander, let us define these terms. Many times, a word well-defined

will explain much.

“Gossip” is defined as, “idle talk about others, regardless of fact; idle talk or writing” (Webster’s Dictionary). “Slander” is defined as, “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another’s reputation a false and defamatory oral statement about a person” (ibid). While the KJV does not use the word “gossip,” the NAS and similar versions do (For example, Prov. 20:19; II Cor. 12:20). However, within the KJV and NKJV, statements such as “flatters with his lips,” “whisperer,” “whisperings,” and similar terms make clear what gossip is all about! The word “slander,” (and its derivatives: slanderers, slandering, slanderously, etc.) is found in the KJV, NKJV, NAS, and other versions. Mr. Vine says a slanderer is one who is “given to finding fault with the demeanor and conduct of others, and spreading their innuendos and criticisms in the church” (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, p. 580).

Consistently, the Bible tells us to avoid such behavior. To “avoid” something is “to depart, withdraw from, leave” (Webster). A synonym of “avoid” is “shun.” Therefore, this article will encourage all of our dear readers to shun, depart, or leave the sins of uttering false charges, idle talk, and rumors against folks. We need to shun or avoid spreading innuendos and criticisms of others. Such speech ought not have any part in the life of a Christian.

Warnings Against Slander and Gossip

As with other sins related to our speech (lying, cursing, etc.), God warns us about the danger of gossip, and slander, and shows us that such is sinful in His sight. In fact, the practice of slandering and gossip has always been repugnant to God. Please consider the following Bible examples which declare this truth.

Part of the reason the Israelites did not enter Canaan the first time was because of the “evil report” ten of the twelve spies brought back (Num. 13:32). When God punished the folks for their unbelief, He said, “I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD” (Num. 14:35-37). God called what those ten spies did “slander.” These folks had spread “innuendos and criticism” against God, denying His power to deliver them from the giants and others who inhabited the land (Num. 13:31-33). The result was that this generation wandered for forty years, not being allowed to enter the Promised Land! Therefore, we can see quite clearly that the end result of slander is not a “minor” thing! The Israelites lost a generation of people in the Wilderness because of slander! How tragic.

David wrote in the long ago: “All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt” (Ps. 41:7). It ought to be clear to us that folks who wish to engage in gossip and slanderous talk do such because they hate the one they are talking about! When someone says, “I love _____, but did you hear

about?" This one is adding lying to the sin of gossip! David understood that whispering, and talking behind folks' backs comes from the mouth of hatred, and not love! David once wrote that the one who would abide in God's tabernacle, or dwell in His holy hill would be the person who does not slander (Ps. 15:3)! Are we guilty of slandering folks? Are we guilty of showing hatred toward our brethren because we have been gossiping against them? If so, this is the time to repent!

Are you tired of your friends and companions? Are you ready for some new ones? Solomon declares that the way to "separate intimate friends" is to gossip about them. Please read Proverbs 16:28: "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." Later in the same book, Solomon wrote, "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips" (Prov. 20:19). The New American Standard's rendering of this passage ends by saying, "...Therefore do not associate with a gossip." Truer words were never said!

In the New Testament, among the many "sins of the Gentiles" listed, Paul said these people had been guilty of "whisperings" (slander, NAS)! In Romans 1 it is made clear that those who did not like to retain God in their knowledge (v. 28) were also guilty of slander! These folks, Paul said, were "worthy of death," as well as those who stood idly by and allowed such sins to take place without rebuke (Rom. 1:32)! Later on in the book of Romans, Paul called it "slander" when some said that he had taught "situation ethics" to the people ("Let us do evil that good may come," Rom. 3:8). Paul had never taught anything like this, and he

considered it "slander" when folks suggested to the Roman Christians that he had taught such.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth for the second time and made it clear that he worried that upon his arrival among them, he might find them "such as ye would not" (II Cor. 12:20). He wanted them to shape up and correct some things before he got there personally. Among the things listed that they need to correct was gossip among them!

The above references, as well as many other Biblical passages make it clear that God does not sanction gossip or slander in any form! Therefore, if God does not approve of it, we need to stay away from it. If, while Christ lived, He did not engage in such activities, and He is our example (I Pet. 2:21-22), then we need to stay away from it, too!

Editor's Note:

Due to this article's length, I decided to break it in half for the bulletin. Lord willing, we will conclude this study about gossip and slander in next week's bulletin. In the meantime, please consider these things well and try to put into practice what has been taught.

"As a Christian one has his foot on Satan's neck -- keep it there." (Loren Raines, What Doth The Lord Require, p. 51).



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

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“Homosexual Marriage One Day ...”

Jarrod Jacobs

The push for the acceptance of homosexual marriage is running high in some quarters of our country right now. Under the banner of "love," "commitment," "tax breaks," and "civil rights," homosexuals are running to San Francisco, Vermont, and Massachusetts in order to be married. They are balking at the Biblical truth that marriage is between one man and one woman for life (Gen. 2:18-25; Rom. 7:1-3). This space will not allow me to develop specific arguments, presently. I do, however, want to deal with the consequences of what San Francisco, Vermont and Massachusetts have done.

Since these separate governmental bodies are allowing God's definition of marriage to change to include men marrying men and women marrying women (see: Rom. 1:26-27), how long will it be before the polygamists cry out for *their* rights to be considered "legal" and "married"? If we will be consistent, where will it end? What if someone wishes to marry an animal? What shall we do when siblings want to get married? There is no end to sinful practices once we get started!

Homosexuals claim "discrimination" because people are opposed to their sinful behavior. How long will it be until their tactics are practiced by yet more and more sexual deviants? ***It's later than we think!!***

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