

How to keep Christ's Body from turning into Peyton's Place by Pastor Don Eldridge
(Promoting unity and stopping gossip and continual drama in the local church)

This is a special participation feedback of many believers who invested the time to share their wisdom.

- Don't assume you know all the facts about an issue before coming to a conclusion.
- Mind your own business.
- Listening to gossip is still gossip.
- You will be held accountable in the day of judgment for every word you speak.
- Bind and loose. Recognize the source - spiritual warfare and that there can be spirits of darkness behind peoples words.
- Generalizing about someone or something can lead to wrong information.
- Stop blaming the devil - recognize and deal with your part. Some Christians do more damage than the devil!
- If I hear a rumor I track down the source of every comment or e-mail that comes to me. The original story is usually different than what got passed on.
- Let stuff go! More words keep strife alive.

This survey is fueled by love and a suggestion from someone who pointed out the need in the Body of Christ to deal with this subject. No Christians were condemned too badly in the producing of the material. Some toes are sore!

Proverbs 26:20 Where *there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.*

- The key is to die to self. If we stopped thinking about ourselves and started putting others first, we would not have anything to complain about.
- We must all stop justifying our own gossip as "concern" while labeling what others are doing is "sin". ANY complaining about ANY one to anyone except the person you have an issue with is gossip.
- Recognize that complaining about anything or anyone is a sin of ingratitude toward God FIRST.
- Like my momma said, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all". That is profound! It would be a lot quieter, peaceful and grace-filled if we just obeyed that!
- Avoid giving opinions where it is not helpful or edifying.

Ephesians 4:29 *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

- Confirm information before you pass it on. What are the real facts and all of the facts? Then discern if it needs to be passed on at all.
- Be careful of walking in a spirit of judgment concerning peoples motives, actions, words, events, etc.

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

- Be careful of passing on information under the guise of interceding for others. Is it really intercession you are interested in?
- Are you having prayer gossip or a prayer meeting?
- Avoid busying yourself with other peoples business.
- Our focus should be to manifest his presence.
- We need to practice what we preach about the power of the tongue. I am asking the Lord to tame my tongue and allow me to speak His desires for others.
- We must focus on our similarities, our common denominator in Jesus and not on our differences.
- Holding on to grudges is the sin of unforgiveness and should have no place in our life.

Leviticus 19:18 *You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

- Act like who a Christian should act like - Christ.
- If we have been involved in or causing strife in the body we need to ask where we need a course correction.
- There is no time or energy for strife. It drains one of refreshment, infilling, and joy.

James 3:16 (KJV) *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

- A divided house cannot stand (Luke 11:17). We must be vigilant and close gates of strife behind ourselves and each other.
- Change our perspectives - focus on the needs of others rather than continue on our own hurts and disappointments.

Philippians 2:1-4 *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

"Would you rather be right or have relationship?"
~ Jack Frost
Prioritize relationships. Give up the need to be right!

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Trivia:

Peyton Place is an American prime time soap opera which aired on ABC in half-hour episodes from September 15, 1964 to June 2, 1969.

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- When you have an issue go, to the pastor with it rather than gathering a group of people who agree with you. That is called campaigning. That is what Korah did to Moses. Remember what happened to him.
- Focus on reaching the lost and comforting those who mourn.
- The person listening is just as guilty as the one speaking.
- Don't make a big deal out of small things - stop being a stress puppy!
- Wait till you are calmed down to deal with tough issues.
- Don't overreact to problems - It is part of life and will have to be dealt with. Bad attitudes make them worse.
- Gossiping and slandering to family members is a sin. Gossiping and giving your offense to spouse is also sin.

Leviticus 19:16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Proverbs 11:13 A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

- Negativity does not edify - Love believes the best.
- Unity in our families and church is worth the work and effort. It is ludicrous to think it doesn't take hard work to keep it.
- Avoid self defeatist talking like unity is impossible.
- Seek to have empathy to understand where people are coming from. You don't have to agree with them to have empathy.
- Embrace that there will be spiritual warfare in this arena. Don't complain about the battle. Laugh at the devil. He overplays his hand!
- If it is causing strife or harm in the body, let the pastor know.
- We need to focus on the positive in others, but if they are going to gossip they need to be corrected. If they don't repent they should be brought before the church.

Proverbs 22:10 Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

- Bless those who curse you.
- People gossip under the guise of seeking counsel.
- People gossip under the guise of prayer.
- Murphy's Law: Sometimes those who shout the loudest against gossip are the biggest perpetrator of it.
- Some prayer is not of faith but of gossip. The prayer of faith will heal the sick, not the prayer of gossip.
- Marriage privileges are not a license to gossip and slander. Your spouse is not a garbage can!
- Deal with things as they happen. Don't let them build up and become a big deal.
- Be honest and tell people, " I will not listen to you complain about people".

Matthew 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

- Gossip does not bring healing. Talking about how someone who needs healing does not help them get healed.
- Celebrate and support the success of others. Refuse jealousy, envy, rivalry, or slander. We need to be each other's cheerleader!

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

The Hottest shows are ready to be released...

revival fires are blowing forth and great reviews are reported for the church this season:

Good News For Sincere Believers!

Just in:

The tired, old, laborious rerun called 'Peyton's Place in the church' is being cancelled, shelved and forever forsaken...

A new unbelief-buster is being released..

(Peyton, take a back seat, It's replacement time!)

Yes it's out with old and in with the new!

It's time for the release of the inspiring, radiant, and faith-Building:

Matthews Place, 18:15

Matthew's , 18:15, is a bold new show of grace, courage and unity

Yes, 'Peyton had its run, but the place it gave to the devil caused many a cold and undiscerning disciple to question God's power and waiver at living a sold out life.

God, true to His Word has set forth that which we may Now See and Hear:

Matthew's Place, 18:15

"Between thee and him alone" is a monumental theme full of honesty, truth and powerful results!

This GAIN- THY- BROTHER plot (that closes the door of gossip and life-sucking humanism)

will have churches multiplying and demons crying!

That's **Matthew's Place, 18:15**

Look for it in your Bible, download it in your heart.

This "Place" is here to stay...

Matthew's Place, 18:15

(played out in churches on fire for God...)



~ Pastor Ed Gutfeld
Victory Christian Center
San Rafael, CA



For such is the weakness of human nature, alas, that evil is often more readily believed and spoken of another than good. But perfect men do not easily believe every tale that is told them, for they know that man's nature is prone to evil, and his words to deception. ~ Thomas a Kempis



By Lesley Silva - What is gossip?

Joyce Meyer Dictionary definition: Rumors or indiscreet talk about other people: one who engages in spreading such. Paul warns believers not to be idle or gossips (1 Tim 5:13) Gossips are also called "tattlers", and "busybodies." It will serve us well to heed Paul's warning, for Jesus said that we will have to answer for every careless word we utter (Matt 12:36)

Matt 12:34 teaches us that "out of the fullness (the overflow, the superabundance) of heart the mouth speaks." If we permit wrong thoughts to dwell in our hearts, we will ultimately speak them. Whatever is hidden in our hearts will sooner or later be expressed openly through our mouths.

Does gossip affect or "infect" a church?

It does BOTH! Nothing good or positive can result from gossip. Set an example by refusing to listen to gossip. Stop your brother or sister in their conversation when you see that it is turning in the direction of gossip. Tell them it is none of your business and you don't want to hear it. That sets boundaries and they won't attempt that again with you and prayerfully not with others either.

Should personal information be shared with others?

Ask yourself a few questions before you share ANY personal information. If this was your personal information would you want it shared or the Church body to know about it? Would it be embarrassing? Would, or could, it shed someone in a less than positive light? Do you have permission to share? Is it your place or any of your business to share? Better left unsaid? Do unto others as you would have it done to you...

Are you participating in gossip if you are just "listening" and not repeating?

Yes! It takes two or more for gossip. If you are listening, you are involved in gossip.

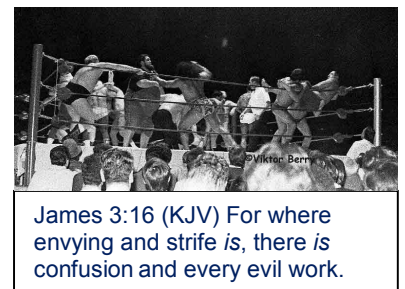
Define drama?

Webster's:any series of events having dramatic interest and leading up to a climax.

Remember, words are seeds; they are containers for power. They carry creative or destructive power and they produce a good harvest or a bad harvest in your life and in the lives of those you love.

[Galatians 6:8](#) For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

[2 Timothy 3:1-5](#) But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!



James 3:16 (KJV) For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

By Linda Harris - People often get wrapped up in gossip because they are picking up the offenses of other people. We hear of the injustice that was done to someone and the enemy uses this to create division, discord and strife. It is human nature to seek out support from people when we feel that we have been treated wrongly or have been hurt. We want to have people rally around us and support our cause. Little do we realize all we are doing is opening the door for the enemy to come in and divide us.

1. If a church member comes to me with a complaint/gripe/issue/concern about another member I need to listen with discernment - THEN tell them they need to approach the person directly to resolve. If they are unwilling to do that I MUST tell them I do not want to hear anything about the person until they are willing to work the issue out directly with the person. If they are afraid to approach the person, I should offer to be there to mediate or be moral support.

2. Along with doing the above I must direct them to Matthew 18:15-17

3. If someone approaches you about another church member you should stop them, go and get the other person, then resume the discussion. If someone has a gripe about another person the only way to correct it is to have the other person involved.

I realize these are not easy steps to follow, many people take the easy way out, they complain but are unwilling to approach or address the person or situation directly.

4. It would be really cool if we videotaped people - something transforming happens when you see yourself acting ugly on tape - somehow it is hard to deny that your being ugly because it is right in front of you. I say that because I had a transforming experience when I saw myself in action - people tried to tell me and I would not listen, but one day it was all caught on tape and when it was replayed I was so disappointed in how I was acting and no longer could I blame anyone but myself.



By Lori Rodrigues

- **Be about God's business: Luke 2:49** And He said unto them, "How is it that ye sought Me? Knew ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"
- **Choose to deal with it as sin: Hebrews 12:1** Therefore, seeing we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- **Dwell on the things of God: Philippians 4:8:** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Proverbs 26:17-28 Message Bible

¹⁷ You grab a mad dog by the ears when you butt into a quarrel that's none of your business. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ People who shrug off deliberate deceptions, saying, "I didn't mean it, I was only joking," are worse than careless campers who walk away from smoldering campfires. ²⁰ When you run out of wood, the fire goes out; when the gossip ends, the quarrel dies down. ²¹ A quarrelsome person in a dispute is like kerosene thrown on a fire. ²² Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you want junk like that in your belly? ²³ Smooth talk from an evil heart is like glaze on cracked pottery. ²⁴⁻²⁶ Your enemy shakes hands and greets you like an old friend, all the while conniving against you. When he speaks warmly to you, don't believe him for a minute; he's just waiting for the chance to rip you off. No matter how cunningly he conceals his malice, eventually his evil will be exposed in public. ²⁷ Malice backfires; spite boomerangs. ²⁸ Liars hate their victims; flatterers sabotage trust.

I Corinthians 13:4-8 ~ Love Quiz

Love suffers long	Q) Are you patient with imperfect people?
Love is kind	Q) Are you active in doing and speaking good?
Love does not envy	Q) Are you putting others first?
Love does not parade itself	Q) Are you non-possessive and non-competitive, and want other people to get ahead?
Love is not puffed up	Q) Are you humble in your dealings and communication with others?
Love does not behave rudely	Q) Do you speak things that would embarrass or shame others?
Love does not seek its own	Q) Do you insist on being right all the time?
Love is not provoked	Q) Are you irritable or touchy, rough or hostile, easily set off? Are you graceful under pressure?
Love thinks no evil	Q) Do you keep an account of wrongs done to you or do you erase resentments?
Love does not rejoice in iniquity	Q) Do you find satisfaction in the shortcomings of others and spread an evil report?
Love rejoices in the truth	Q) Do you aggressively advertise the good about others?
Love bears all things	Q) Do you defend and hold others up?
Love believes all things	Q) Do you believe the best of others, credit them with good intentions, and are not suspicious?
Love hopes all things	Q) Do you give up on people? Do you affirm their future?
Love endures all things	Q) Do you persevere and remain loyal to others?
Love never fails	Q) Do you openly root for others to win?

Proverbs 25:12 (AMP) Like an earring or nose ring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprover to an ear that listens

Are you a peacemaker or enabler?:

- Do their words affect you and your attitude and cause you to make judgments against people being spoken against?
- Do these people go to their offenders or one's they have offended because of your advice?
- Do you find yourself being an advocate for this person? (Defending them because you know their heart)
- Do you have a savior mentality? (Only you understand and can help them)
- Does your counsel result in their righteous behavior and being made right with people; or do you simply act as a loading dock for their negativity, relieving their conscience of having to be made right?
- Do they come back to you repeatedly for the same problem or about the same person?

Mathew 5:9 Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God

Gossip Spreads ... Love covers

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.	
1 Peter 4:8-9 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."	
Psalm 15:1-3 LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? ² He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; ³ He <i>who</i> does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;	1 Peter 3:10-12 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."

Ephesians 4:30-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

James 4:11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

Romans 14:10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Proverbs 6:16-19 These ... *things* the LORD hates ... one who sows discord among brethren.

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

What they say	Scripture	What they really mean
"I am just venting"	Proverbs 29:11 A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise <i>man</i> holds them back.	I have no self control and I feel better when I complain.
"I need to talk to someone"	James 5:16 Confess <i>your</i> trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.	I don't care about obeying scripture or making things right - I have to say something, even if it hurts someone.
"Everyone gossips"	Titus 3:2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.	I have a big mouth and have no plans of changing it.
"I Can handle it. People need someone to talk to"	Proverbs 18:8 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body.	I like listening to gossip and I am not like others - It doesn't affect me.
"God knows we sin. We are all under grace."	Romans 6:1-2a What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not!	I am using the grace of God as a shield from any accountability.

Verbal Diarrhea defined:

1. An adj. given to someone who expresses their awkwardness through words.
2. Used to describe a person who cannot control his random thoughts from exploding, which get them into trouble.
3. A condition suffered by an individual who has the inability to shut up, i.e. the words keep flowing.

Example: "Don't get involved in a conversation with Jill, she has a bad case of verbal diarrhea."

Kehopectate and Pepto Bismo do not help verbal diarrhea; only God's word can. Psalm 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Watch out. Word travels fast

Ecclesiastes 10:20 Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, and a bird in flight may tell the matter.

Luke 12:2-3 For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. ³ Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.



God's Promise of Protection:

Psalm 31:20 You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.



Pastor Tom Terry - Faith Alive Fellowship, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin (www.faithalivefellowship.org)

Unfortunately the last person who is going to let you know they are a gossip is a gossip. I taught a series of messages on the strength and weakness of men and women. I started with the men and dealt with their main weaknesses of pride, lust, etc. Then I ministered to the women the power of their words, as they are more verbal, generally speaking, than men. I would also say that a Pastor needs to weave the teaching on the power of words in and all our messages because it's a vital and important issue concerning the church as a whole. I have also learned to give vivid illustrations of the hurt gossip has caused (without naming names). I don't think any true believer really wants to cause hurt or pain to another.

Another observation: Most Pastors seem to separate their leadership from the rest of the congregation too much. There seems to be a tendency among Pastors to only share some things with their leaders but the harder issues they don't share with the rest of the body. I realize they do this because they have experienced that some folks may get offended and leave, but I have learned that we should share most of these issues with everyone – with discernment, or course. If someone leaves they will leave down the road anyway. It's healthy pruning. Pastors must stop being afraid of folks leaving – it's normal in any healthy church. Of course new growth will come also. The congregation will grow strong and splits will cease, if we are not afraid to address these kinds of issues.

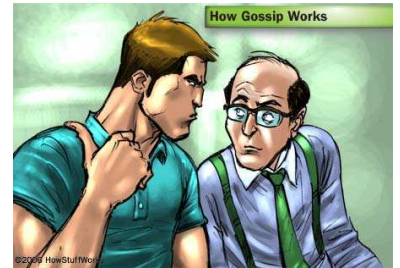
It is normal to want to tell someone you can trust with your issues, whether it is about an individual or a situation in the church that bothers or hurts them. There is nothing wrong with sharing your heart with someone you can trust as long as what you share is not shared for genuine help and advice and it goes no further. The important thing is that the person listening suggest they go to the person who offended them or they have issue with and offer to go along with if they are uncomfortable approaching them alone. It is always better to confront in love the one who offends you one on one... but, if that is not possible, take someone with you.



The person listening to a complaint should always try to understand the person's heart and discern if this is factual or just oversensitivity and bring the wisdom of God in their counsel. One should not breach a confidence, but always suggest the person go to leadership or the person to remedy it

etc. Every situation is different so we must pray and discern on the best way to handle it. Always go the way of love because that is the heart of our Father and restoration and reconciliation is His heart always.

As far as spreading dirt about others in some way, that is unacceptable anywhere and should not even be considered in the church. The church should be a safe place where whole or broken people can feel protected and nurtured in an environment that does not condemn or judge.



When fire begins to spark, it needs to be extinguished immediately before a forest fire breaks out -- and we all know what the word says about the tongue. It is up to us as God's children to always bless and build up, not tear down. Spiritual maturity will determine how we handle gossip and I think that needs to be defined first and foremost because much of what I have defined above is not simply gossiping, but hurting individuals going to safe people for help. To sum this up, the church needs to be safe place where people can learn, be nurtured, grow, and equipped for the work of the ministry. The bottom line is that we are all broken humanity trying to live in unity and follow God's standard for living from different places of pain in our lives. There will always be issues that is why Grace, Grace, and more Grace is required.

Titus 2:3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

1 Timothy 5:11-14 But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, ¹² having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. ¹³ And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. ¹⁴ Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

WARNING! WARNING!



Proverbs 11:9 The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

Psalm 101:5a Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy;



Out of all the things shared what stands out in your mind as the most often repeated?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Good Advice for Pastors



- Leadership needs to set the example. It starts with them.
- Calm down before dealing with issues or people. Don't overreact and make a situation worse.
- Don't take attacks too personal (easy for you to say) as this is part of the ministry and ones cross to carry.
- Be confidential. Speak in private, and keep it there.
Proverbs 11:13 A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.
- Schedule a specific designated time to deal with a difficult issue. Never meet with someone who comes up before or after a service and says, "I have to speak with you NOW!"
- Direct people who come to you with problems about others to Matthew 18:15 and ask them - "have you talked to the person about this?"



Three preachers are a boat far from land. They decide they are going to confess their shortcomings. One asks another, 'What is something that you have a problem with?'
 The first one says, 'Well, I have a problem with alcohol. I like to take to the bottle sometimes.'
 The second one says, 'Well, I have a problem with lust. I desire every woman I see.'
 One of the others asks the third one, 'Well, what is something that you have a problem with?'
 The third preacher replies, 'Gossip, and I can't wait to get back to shore!'

Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you. ²² For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.



"Gossip is cancer in the blood stream of the body of Christ. It travels to other parts of the body and destroys it." Tom Brock

What I have resolved to do:	Advice to me:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not overreact to the negativity of other people. Try not to be John Wayne to the church with both barrels blazing! ❖ Speak with people in private and not right after a service or in front of others. ❖ Not repeat things people share with me to others in the church, and not talk to others about people's problem unless they need to be involved in the solution. ❖ Not discuss my family matters with others in the church. ❖ Not openly discuss people's problems in front of our children. ❖ Not speak negatively or assume the worst about people in the church, but focus on the positive. ❖ Be more patient with my family and people in the church. ❖ Confront gossip when I hear it and stop it in its tracks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to preach on love, grace and forgiveness as a way of life. • Continue to preach convicting messages; not fearing what man may say, or how they will react. Maintain a good balance of compassion and conviction. • Don't be afraid to preach honestly. • Don't talk about past hurts or people in the church. • If someone continues to cause strife mark them; make a mental note of them (Romans 16:17) Now I urge you, brethren, note (mark) those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Guest Article by Dale Robbins (For more articles see <http://www.victorious.org>)


The Apostle Peter, used murder as a comparison with another, sometimes under-rated sin. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Peter 4:15). Notice that a "busybody" is placed in the same company as "murderers, thieves, and evildoers. The dictionary defines a busybody as "a meddler; a person who seeks confidential information about others; a snoop; a nosy person."

A busybody is a close relative to gossip -- a person who meddles in the affairs of others. They are like a peeping-tom who snoops and spies. A busybody is the investigator for the gossips and rumormongers, seeking to uncover sensational details and to whisper the latest news. Sometimes busybodies are persons who have too much time on their hands, with nothing better to do than to talk too much. "Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to" (1 Tim. 5:13).

- Call each other on it. Refuse to listen. "You are gossiping"
- Stop considering it a bad habit and call it for what it is: SIN!

"Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down" (Prov.26:22).

"With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor" (Prov. 11:9).

- Gossip exists whenever persons "talk about others" in less than a favorable way. The root of gossip is negativity, judgementalism, slander, etc.
- Avoid associating with people who gossip "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much" (Prov. 20:19). You probably remember the old saying: "If you can't say something good about others, don't say anything at all." Wise advice if you wish to avoid sin.
- Gossip often masquerades as "concern" for others 

"A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends" (Prov. 16:28). A gossip thrives on the negative, the controversial, and the sensational. Any person who is genuinely concerned about solving a problem, will go and privately confront the person at the source and express their concern. Or else they should go privately to the pastor so he will do it.

- There are times when people need to confide their own problems with a friend in the Lord. But avoid revealing anything to a person who gossips -- they can't be trusted.

"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret" (Prov. 11:13).

Things to Remember about Gossip:

- ✚ Gossip is as sinful as murder and will suffer the same consequences unless there is repentance (Rom. 1:32).
- ✚ God holds you accountable to your words (Matt. 12:36-37).
- ✚ The person who gossips to you about others, also gossips to others about you.
- ✚ Gossip & slander disqualifies persons for spiritual leadership (1 Tim. 3:11, Jas. 3:2).
- ✚ Gossip often masks as pretentious concerns for others.
- ✚ Gossip often thrives upon secrecy. Where secrecy is removed, gossip is hampered.
- ✚ Gossip always contributes to a problem and never to a solution.
- ✚ Gossip always distorts and exaggerates, and is never a reliable source of truth.
- ✚ Those who gossip & slander are not in right fellowship with God (Rom. 1:28-32).
- ✚ Those who gossip rarely get answers to prayer, and often face persistent, unexplainable problems (Psalms 66:18, Prov. 21:23, Prov. 6:12-15).

What to do about Gossip :

- ✚ If you have been a gossip, confess this as sin and ask Christ to forgive you. "Repent" by turning in a new direction and surrendering your tongue to Christ, not to gossip or bad-mouth again (1 John 1:9, 1 Cor. 7:10).
- ✚ Keep your nose out of other people's business.
- ✚ If you can't say something good or encouraging about others, then keep your mouth shut (Eph. 4:29).
- ✚ Never criticize another person, except to their own face with an intent to help. Criticism can never be "constructive" if expressed to anyone else.
- ✚ If your "friends" start bad-mouthing others to you, stop them in their tracks -- refuse to be a partaker of their sins (1 Tim 5:22).
- ✚ Avoid association with persons who gossip (Prov. 20:19).
- ✚ Expose works of darkness by reporting gossip to the pastor that he may confront and offer correction. Gossip should be treated as any other vile sin (Eph. 5:11).

"I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth as long as the wicked are in my presence" (Psalms 39:1).

** always speak the truth in love with one another and protect one another, thinking more of others than of yourself..this is the sign of Christian maturity...and really is not that what most of us want?