

Gossip

Romans 1:28-32

In A World Of Sinners

- God has condemned the sinful lifestyle
- Paul often made lists to make his point
 - He wants us to see the pervasiveness of this behavior
 - Verse 29 - “being filled with all unrighteousness ... wickedness ...”
 - He wants us to see the similarity between these behaviors
 - Verse 32 - “... deserving of death ...”

In A World Of Sinners

- Some of the practices/attitudes listed are to be expected ... some stand out
 - “Disobedient to parents” (Verse 30)
 - “Whisperers” (“gossips” ESV, NASV) (Verse 29)
 - “Backbiters” (“slanderers” ESV, NASV) (Verse 30)
- Paul puts the person who speaks evil of another in the same list as the murderer and sexual deviant

Talking Like The Devil

- “Slanderer” (“backbiter”) has an interesting connection
 - “Backbiters” (“slanderers”) translated from Greek *kategor*
 - “Slanderer” also translated from Greek *diabolos*
 - Frequently rendered “devil”
 - Revelation 12:9-10 - “... called the Devil and Satan”

Talking Like The Devil

- “Slander” means “malicious talk; to spread damaging information; to defame; to speak ill of” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)
 - A work of the Devil (Satan) - Slanderers are on his team
- “Gossip” means “to indulge in idle talk or rumors about others; spreading of sensational stories” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) ... “idle, or malicious talk about others” (Funk & Wagnall’s Dictionary)
- “Talebearer” in Old Testament
 - Leviticus 19:16 - “You shall not go about as a talebearer ...”

Talking Like The Devil

- Gossiping is a sign of foolishness
 - Proverbs 11:12-13 - “A gossip betrays a confidence ...” (NIV)
- If one comes to talk to you about another, be sure he will talk about you as well.
- Proverbs 20:18-19 - “Plans are established by counsel ... a talebearer reveals secrets”
- “Talebearer” - “... a trafficker who ‘goes about’ offering his wares of scandal, and ‘revealing secrets,’ to the prejudice of others ...” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown)

Swallowing Everything

- An interesting picture of gossip
 - Proverbs 18:6-8 - “6 A fool’s lips enter into contention, And his mouth calls for blows. 7 A fool’s mouth is his destruction, And his lips are the snare of his soul. 8 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And **they go down into the inmost body** (‘The words of a talebearer are as wounds’ (KJV))”
- The NIV calls the words of the gossip “choice morsels”
- To “swallow greedily. As a passive noun, it means something gulped. It is used to describe gossip as something that most people will swallow whole and be permeated by it.” (Complete Word Study Dictionary)
- Proverbs 26:20-22 - “... no talebearer, strife ceases”

Masquerading As Concern

- Gossip often masquerades as “concern” for others
- The gossip may seek you out as a “confidante”
- In reality, the gossip is not sincerely concerned about solving the problem, only in talking about it
 - Proverbs 16:28 - “... a whisperer separates the best of friends”
- The genuinely concerned person will follow Jesus’ counsel
 - Matthew 18:15-17 - “... tell him his fault between you and him alone”
- Times when we need to confide with a friend ... consider your true motivation

“Every Idle Word”

- Matthew 12:36-37 - “... by your words you will be justified ... condemned”
 - “Idle talk” - that which is “barren or worthless, flippant or irresponsible” (MacArthur)
 - As in chess - no move should be taken without a reason
- Words are designed to mean something ... spoken with a purpose.
 - Gossip has the wrong purpose/motivation

“Every Idle Word”

- I Timothy 5:3-13 - Paul tells that the church is obligated to support certain widows but to refuse support to some others
 - Verse 3 - “Honor widows who are really widows”
 - Verse 11 - “But refuse the younger widows ...”
 - Idle people tend to engage in idle talk
 - “Busybodies” - “... used of people who scurry about fussing over, and meddling in, other peoples’ affairs” (Complete Word Study Dictionary)
 - Matthew 5:37 - “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’”

“Every Idle Word”

- I Peter 4:14-16 - “... let none of you suffer as a ... busybody ...”
- Consider the various type of slander
 - Publicly criticizing with an “I’m joking” at the end
 - “Snarky” remarks meant to hurt or express an opposing opinion
 - Back handed compliments like, “I really like that scarf, but couldn’t you have worn a matching one?”
 - Positive words with non-verbal disapproval
- REMEMBER: Is our speech with love for one another or meant to hurt?

“Every Idle Word”

- Remember: Those that slander (backbite), engage in foolish or coarse joking, and those who participate with them, engage in sin as evil as fornication
- Ephesians 5:1-10 - “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children ...”
- As a Christian do you occasionally slip-up and:
 - Commit a murder here and there
 - Burglarize a home
 - Steal from the store
 - Gossip or slander, engage in idle talk or rumors
- According to the Bible, these sins are all equal

Some Facts About Gossip

- Gossip and slander disqualify a person for spiritual leadership - 1 Timothy 3:10-12 - "... being found blameless"
- Gossip always contributes to a problem and never to a solution
- Gossip destroys friendships and cripples churches
- Gossip always distorts and exaggerates, it is never a reliable source of truth
- Those who gossip and slander are not in fellowship with God

What To Do About Gossip

- If you have been a gossip, confess this sin and ask God to forgive you
- Keep your nose out of other people's business
- If you can't say something good or encouraging about others, then keep your mouth closed
- Never criticize another person, except to his/her own face with the intent to help. Criticism can never be "constructive" if expressed to someone else
- If your "friends" start bad-mouthing others to you, stop them in their tracks - refuse to be a partaker of their sins
- Avoid association with person who gossip

James 3:1-12

1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh."

Conclusion

- We need to take gossip and slander as seriously as God does ... knowing our salvation depends on it
- James 4:14 - "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."
- Psalms 39:1-5 - "... I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue ..."

We need to ... WE MUST ... watch and control our tongue