

Gossip? Who Me?

(video transcript)

By *Karen Spiegelberg*

Pssst...come here. No, closer. Did you hear?

Did you hear that...gossip is one of the most deadly diseases for women today?



I'm Karen Spiegelberg. Welcome to A WORD for Women—a show by women and for women where we build each other up in our amazing and wonderful God-given roles in life!

Gossip a deadly killer?

Really?

Yes.

Words in the form of gossip can destroy the people we talk about. Proverbs 11 verse 9 tells us: “With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors,” But St. Paul in his letter to the Romans is much tougher in his words when he likens gossip to murder [Romans 1:29-32 NIV]. And then says that, “Although they know God’s righteous decree”, that’s us, right? We know God’s righteous decree? “those who do such things deserve death, [vs. 32]”

What?

Murder?

Deserve death?

Huh?

Do I have your attention now?

I know that section of Romans really caught mine. Now you’re saying like I did, “Okay, um, well, before this sentence is pronounced on me, just exactly what would you define as gossip?”

Gossip in short is any communication that hurts people. An exchange of talk that accuses someone, reveals a secret about them, or challenges their character or reputation. A good measure of whether or not you are talking trash about someone is when you ask yourself, “Would I be saying the same thing right in front of the person I’m talking about?”

Hm, I think we’d answer “no” to that. But then why do we gossip? What is the source of it?

We gossip because our human, sinful nature just loves the lure of good, juicy information. We may do it because of low self-esteem, jealousy, bitterness towards someone else, joining the crowd for acceptance, or many other reasons.

And what is the source of these actions? Satan. Satan started gossip. Jesus Christ in John chapter 8 verse 44 [NIV] said, “He was a murderer from the beginning,” Today, Satan uses unsuspecting people like you and me. It sounds something like this, “Did you hear that...” or “Just between you and me...” Or it might even be disguised like, “You might want to keep so-and-so in your prayers, because...”

Alright, we’re guilty. Pretty sure there’s not one among us who can say that we haven’t gossiped at one time or another, whether we intended to or not.

So what’s the solution? First, realize how much God hates gossip. When I researched Bible passages referencing gossip, I was shocked by how many passages talked about gossip; far too many to mention here. This should tip us off that gossip is a serious issue to God—one not to be taken lightly. Our almighty God thunders it in the eighth commandment in what I imagine in my mind in a Charlton Heston-type of voice when he says, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

And in Proverbs chapter 11 verse 13 [NIV], “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.”

And in Psalm 34 verse 13 [NIV], “keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.”

And then, in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 29 [NIV], “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

God doesn’t want to see his children hurting each another, yet time after time, we destroy one another with gossip. We need to declare a cease fire on our tongues, and have the same attitude that God has against gossip. Once we recognize our shortcoming in this area, it’s a call to repentance for all the times we failed. And our God, our loving Father, is quick and unconditional in his forgiveness.

But what do we do the next time gossip comes alluring? The most loving thing you can do is to stop it in its tracks. Remember. It takes two to tango. Try to put a positive spin on any gossip that comes your way. Tell the person gossiping that you’d really rather not talk about said person. And/or, tell that person that maybe our prayers and encouragement are what’s needed instead. And of course, only with God’s help can we overcome this type of habit or behavior.

Psalm 19 verse 14 [NIV] gives us a plea, “May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

And if we slip up once in a while and are tempted to fall back into gossip again, there’s always a backup plan... (Karen puts duct tape on her mouth and holds up a sign, “Thank you for joining us on A WORD for Women.)

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