

## The Shot Heard Round the World—Gossip

(Go to Meeting)

Steve Durham—2021

I wanted to talk to you about something that is not in the Bible! How many of you remember *‘the shot heard round the world.’* It’s come to be a phrase associated with the opening shots at the Battle of Lexington and Concord in the American Revolution, April 19, 1775.

That Revolutionary War led to the creation of the United States. It’s an amazing situation where I think that six Americans were killed, another six wounded, and then the British went onto Concord. The results were a fight, a war, one that many thought we would not win, **but God’s hand of Providence was in that!**

Another place that ‘a shot heard round the world’ is also associated with is the assassination in Sarajevo of Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. Many of you history buffs will remember that, June 28 1914. It was an event that was considered to be one of the immediate causes of WWI—another war, battle and fight—a big fight, a world fight. Gavrilo Princip fired two shots, the first hitting Ferdinand’s wife Sophie and the second hitting the Arch Duke and killing him.

In both of these situations, a shot was fired—an aggressive action—and underhanded dastardly event that ignited a hailstorm of aggression and death, as we all know. Many were killed and since then and before many conflicts from the beginning of time up to today have taken place.

In the history of mankind there has only been about 20 years of peace in the entirety of that time period. That’s an amazing situation in this age of man that that would happen.

*Borgen Magazine*, in a article *How Many Wars are Going on Right Now* the author defines what a war is. He says,

*How Many Wars are Going on Right Now?*  
November 17, 2013  
{<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/many-wars-going-right-now/>}

I will use the definition of war as any conflict where 2 or more parties of armed forces account for 1,000 or more battle-related deaths.

In the Church, in our Family of the Body of Christ, these things happen! We’re going to talk about why they happen. It’s a shame that they do, but there are many Scriptures that talk about it.

I said that I want to talk about something that’s not in the Bible. You can search the Bible for the word *gossip*, which is not in the Bible. But it is one of the underlying causes of conflict and wars. This is Satan’s world (2-Cor. 4:4).

We are carnal, the world is carnal and the world has been blinded, a veil over them. We know that the world has been blinded by Satan. God allows that veil to blind people at this point for a reason, a future purpose, and we know what that purpose is, the plan of God and the Holy Days picture that.

He’s also the ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Eph. 2:2). So, he works in attitudes, and in a way as a spirit being with thoughts in the atmosphere and bombard us constantly and cause us to do things. To have

- aggressive moods and attitudes
- depression
- bitterness
- envy
- anger
- feeling like somebody might be trying to harm us

***All the things that Satan is all about is in the air, and it affects us!***

James talks about this. There are many things chapter 4, we won’t have time to go through them all; but I want to focus on *gossip* and *synonyms of gossip* that the Bible does explain and talk about. The Bible gives warning, because God hates war; He does not want war and have us fighting among one another.

James 4:1: “*What is the cause of quarrels and fighting among you?....*”

Not only in the Church but in all mankind. Cain and Abel were the first recorded in which a murder occurred.

“*...Is it not mainly from your own lusts that are warring within your members?*” (v 1).

Not having control of that; allowing that lust, desire, envy, gain, greed, pride, arrogance—*the works of the flesh*—be uncontrolled, unguarded and unchecked. That war in our members!

Verse 2: “*You lust... [Isn’t that one of the commandments? God lays that out for us!] ...and have not; you kill, and are jealous, and are not able to obtain; you fight and quarrel, but still you do not*

have... [Why? *Because you're separated from God!*]  
...**because you do not ask.**

There's another part to that, as well. God is into pleased with that attitude. It's a dissent, a division, something that is not going to get God's attention. He's not pleased with that.

Verse 3: "*Then you ask, and you do not receive, because you ask with evil motives...*"

Isaiah 59:2: "**But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you,** that He will not hear."

James 4:3: "...because you ask with evil motives, that you may consume *it* on your own lusts."

- self-centered
- selfish
- self-determined
- self-perpetuating
- self-aggrandizing

Verse 4: "*You adulterers and adulteresses...*"

That's more than the physical; that's the spiritual aspect of that, referring back to the commandments, as well. We're breaking a physical commandments, but it's also the spiritual application of that.

"...don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity... [against] ...*with* God? Therefore, whoever desires **to be a friend of the world** makes himself an enemy of God" (v 4).

Christ prayed that God would leave us in the world (John 17), but not to be part of the world. We aren't supposed to be of the world, in that mindset and be affected by that. We're suppose to come out of that and let our lights shine and be 'salt to the world.'

When you don't, the carnal mind takes over and we are enemies against God. Of course He's not going to hear us!

Verse 5: "Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The spirit that dwells in us lusts with envy'?.... [another reason for gossip] ...But He gives greater grace...." (vs 5-6).

What is grace? *It's not the absence of Law-keeping!* No! it is actually Law-keeping; showing love to God and our neighbor! God loves us and when we enter into that covenant, that commitment with Him, we come under grace. No longer under the curse, but under grace. Christ died for us.

We also have things to do. We work out our own salvation; those are good works done through

the spirit in us.

Verse 6: "But He gives greater grace. This is the reason it says, 'God sets Himself against *the* proud... [if you want to be on the other side of God, be proud] ...but He gives grace to *the* humble.'"

- the opposite of pride is humility
- the opposite of arrogance is contrite spirit
- the opposite of sin is a relationship with God

*It's closeness and forgiveness and repentance! That's what He wants to see!*

He doesn't want to see the other side of it. You're either on one side or the other. There's no in between. You're either in God's favor, good grace or in a covenant and commitment with Him with a clean conscious and sinless through the blood of Christ. **OR** you're over here with Satan and the world. There's no in between. You either are or you're not.

If you're gossiping, which side of the tile are we on? I know that all of us at some time have found ourselves doing that. I think it's very important to ask the question, when we go through this: 'Am I doing this?' I think about myself; I'm talking to myself.

- Do I want to be on the other side of the aisle?
- Do I want to be with God?

**or**

- Do I want to be on the other side?

On the Sea of Glass, will there be any gossipers? Slanderers? Murderers? Anyone breaking the commandments? Lawlessness? **NO! There won't be!** They won't be on the Sea of Glass! So, now it behooves us to get serious about this subject, because it involves more than just gossip. It involves a lot of the attitude that is opposite of God for those *who love God's love!*

Verse 7 "Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." *That's a promise!*

- submit
- yield
- obey
- get rid of self
- get rid of our carnal nature

*We can't get rid of it, but we can ask God to allow that Holy Spirit to put it down and overcome it!*

Until we're changed, we are physical until we are changed to spirit (1-Cor. 15). Submit yourself t God; then what do we do? *Resist the devil!*

Proverbs 4:23<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: "Above all guard the door of your mind..."

Ask God in Jesus' name to rebuke those thoughts, those airwaves, those negatives and fight against those powers that we fight against. They're evil spirits in wicked places. It's a spiritual war, a war for our mind and heart.

James 4:8: "**Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you**.... [another promise!] ...Cleanse *your* hands, you sinners, and purify *your* hearts, you double-minded!" *There's a sermon, many sermons right there in that Scripture!*

- drawing close to God
- repenting
- asking for repentance
- asking for forgiveness

Through the process of the blood of Christ to help justify us and make us righteous as Christ is and seen as Christ with the faith of Christ in us. Then God sees us, draws close to us!

"...**purify your hearts**..."—*circumcision of the heart!* It's not flesh, it's the heart, the spirit, that He wants. That's what God wants us to do, *purify our hearts!* And don't be "...**double minded**"; somebody that says they're in the Church, somebody that says that they have a covenant with God and they keep the Passover and they're on the way, doing everything. Yet, they can't control this:

Verse 26: "**If** anyone among you considers himself to be religious, **and does not control his tongue**..."—*he is double minded! Hypocrite!*

- deceiving self
- self-deception
- self-righteous

I think I'm right but I'm not; I don't see it and I think it's okay.

A lot of times we have people say that they really like that guy, 'but he's got this problem but I really love him, so let me tell you about the problem.' So, in a roundabout way we murder and destroy him. We war and fight against him. We have a conflict and we put him down, kill him—*or her*.

Eleanor Roosevelt was credited with this saying that, 'small minds discuss people, average minds discuss events, and great minds discuss ideas.' And I'm going to add:

- laws and the mind of God
- the thoughts of God
- the ways of God

*Great minds think that way, because God is great! We're nothing! We know who we are; we're well aware of who we are. (1-Cor. 1:26)*

Leading and guiding us; we are the sons of God (Rom. 8); we're seen as potential sons of God.

Romans 4:17 "...and calls the things that are not as though they are."

*He calls us that now; He calls us sons of God to be!* It's like in the womb, that's your baby, your son. You're not born, yet, but He's anticipating that.

Great minds discuss ideas, and this was a carnal statement from Eleanor Roosevelt. What are minds to be on? *The thoughts of God!* We to have the mind of Christ in us (Philip. 2:5). Think with His mind!

I want to discuss something that you don't find in the Bible, the Word; but it is in the Bible in concept, in theory and in principle. It's basic and fundamental. It's dangerous and there are many warnings about it. The opposite of that, we're going to see, as well, that bring peace, happiness, joy, harmony and unity. Psa. 133 says that it's a wonderful thing to see the unity of the brethren.

Though gossip is not in the Bible, the result and the devastation that it causes in the Body of Christ especially—as well as in the world—**for us** is widely mentioned and warned against. Some of the places that we're going to see that—not gossip, but the synonyms of gossip—think about:

- a slanderer
- a busybody
- widows who have nothing else to do

They find themselves talking. They get involved in other people's lives and they talk about them. That's something that the Bible warns about. We have men do that; young men, old men; young women, older women. We all do it! *It's best to have our mind on God and not idle!*

- **troublemakers**

There's an interesting word. Do a little study on troublemakers.

- **talebearers**

Put this up against the Ten Commandments, bearing false witness.

- **a betrayer**

*A murderer!* Have you ever felt like you've been stabbed in the back? Maybe by your 'best friends'; those you thought were your best friends, and find that maybe that wasn't true. Maybe you needed to rethink that.

- What do we do when that happens?
- What did Christ do?

- What did He tell us to do?

*Ask yourself:*

- Am I like this?
- Do I do this?
- What do I do to change it?

➤ **whisperers**

The Bible has a lot to say about whisperers. You've seen people standing in the hallway and getting somebody over in the corner and they're whispering to them and looking around. They see you coming and they stop. When you pass, they continue to whisper. Maybe the next day you see them with somebody else in a corner whispering. What are they whispering about?

➤ **meddlers**

➤ **those who cannot control the tongue**

James has a lot to say about that. No matter what you call it; it doesn't matter what you call *gossip*, it's the effect. Many things, many cousins to it, but it's the same thing. They have the effect of murder and conflict, killing, aggression, hate, envy and lust. All those things we read about. Evil gossip kills three:

- the one who says it
- the one who listens to it
- the one being gossiped about

*Let's think about that!*

**1. The one who says it:**

The way that God wants us to be with God's Holy Spirit and loving our neighbor is to stop before we say something and think about it. If you shut your mouth, it can't come out.

Think about it and let it rattle around up there for a while. Marinate it in the Holy Spirit, think about it, process it. If you're the kind of person who reacts without thinking, without responding—which means you think about it—and then you come out with a comment or statement.

If you think about it long enough with God's Holy Spirit, the possibility is that you won't say it. So, you can get rid of 90% of the problem by just shutting your mouth.

**2. The one who listens to it:**

Have you had someone come up to you and say:

Listen, he/she is such a nice person, I just love him/her, but you know he/she has this problem, but I love him/her so much. But if they don't watch it, they're going to have this problem and let me tell you about it.

- What do you do?

- What should you do in love for that person?

I'd rather not hear it; tell me something good about this person, really good, or don't tell me anything. Would you say this if they were standing right next to me? Would you say this about them? *I don't know, probably not!* Then I don't want to hear it.

Say it in a nice way, but still you have to be firm about it.

**3. The person being gossiped about:**

- Are you destroying that person's reputation?
- Are you destroying their good name?

Not that they are good of themselves, but the name; there's a lot to be said about a name; we're going to get a new name. Christ has all these names and we're going to have a new name, and the end of them is going to be 'elohim.'

Are you destroying that? *Satan would like to see that done!* You're a son of God and He would like to see that destroyed, tarnished, put down, muddied and everything that you can think. He would like to see that person being gossiped about destroyed, especially if they're trying to do what's right. If they're really trying and humbly trying and they have a contrite spirit and they're seeking to do the things that God wants them to do. Satan hates that; he doesn't like that?

There's a movie out about a football player. He was a little different, but he was a 'Christian' and was very determined to do what was right. He did those things and the guys on the team made fun of him until finally, at the end, he won them over and they ended up winning a championship. Good story, and it's a true story. He came to the Indianapolis Colts later on as a professional football player. He walked on from the razorbacks and ended up being a starter.

The point is, he 'stuck to his guns' and did the things that were right, and everybody put him down for it until they couldn't fight it anymore and love won out and they came over to his side. Really good story.

God warns us about the attitude of gossip and what it does.

Lev. 19 is an Old Testament Scripture, but the concept is not old, ancient or old fashioned. It is the way we work, the way God wants us to operate; the opposite of gossip; He warns Israel and us, too.

Leviticus 19:8: "And anyone that eats it shall bear his iniquity because he has profaned the Holy thing of the LORD.... [talking about a sacrifice] ...And that soul shall be cut off from

among his people.... [pretty serious charge] ...And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field. And you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest” (vs 8-9). *In other words, leave a little!*

Verse 10: “And you shall not glean your vineyard. And you shall not gather the *fallen grapes* of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. **I am the LORD your God.**”

What is that showing? *Love toward neighbor! Outgoing concern, caring about them, not wanting to see them without or hurt!* The opposite of gossip.

Verse 11: “You shall not steal, nor lie, nor be deceitful to one another.”

- Do you see how gossip is a cousin to these?
- Do you see how they are breaking the principles that God has laid out for us to operate between brothers/sisters in love for one another?

Verse 12: “And you shall not swear by My name falsely; nor shall you profane the name of your God. **I am the LORD.**” *The name of a person; slander that person’s name, destroy that person!*

Verse 13: “You shall not defraud your neighbor nor rob *him*. The wages of him who is hired shall not stay with you all night until the morning.” *When he’s done his work, give him the money. Don’t it hold it back!*

Verse 14: “You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God. *I am the LORD.*” *He’s telling us how to operate in love for one another!*

Verse 15: “You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment. You shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty... [don’t be a respecter of persons He’s telling Israel] ...*but* you shall judge your neighbor in righteousness”—*righteous judgment!*

We just saw love, all the things we’re not to do, and the things opposite of that are loving your neighbor and doing those things. Then He says:

Verse 16: “**You shall not go as a slanderer** among your people... [notice how it’s lumped in with all the others] ...you shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. **I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart....**” (vs 16-17).

- What did James say/
- Where did it come from?
- Where does gossip come from?

“...You shall always **admonish your neighbor**, that you may not bear sin because of him. **You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge** against the children of your people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD**” (vs 17-18).

Christ tells us the principle that we’re to operate from. It’s not new. We see in the Old Testament that He gives Israel the same charge, the same instruction for dealing with one another in an attitude of caring and loving your neighbor. Gossip does not do that.

Matthew 22:36: “Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law? And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This *is the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vs 36-39)—*very much like it!*

- we love God first
- He loved us first
- we love Him because He loves us
- we love Him because of all He does for us

The way that we show that is by loving our neighbor. That’s why they’re related.

Verse 40: “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” *That’s the entire Bible that they had, the entire Scriptures! They all hang on that; on love!* That’s important and we saw that in Leviticus that we just read.

Slander is *the action or crime or sin of making a false spoken statement, damaging a person’s reputation!* Isn’t it interesting how it relates Biblical terminology. Why did God say, ‘I am the Lord!’ after each one of those?

Because if you do those things that He lists in Lev. 19, you’re slandering, damaging God’s name and the person who has God’s Holy Spirit, His son/daughter, and He doesn’t like that! That’s not good!

Psalms 101:5: “**Whoever secretly...**” *You don’t do it in front of a person; you do it behind their back. That’s also called backstabbing.*

“...**slanders his neighbor, in secret I will cut him off...**” (v 5).

*Let that sink in!* That’s how serious it is to me, that I would be cutoff! From what? *Eternal life!*

“...he who has a haughty look and a proud heart, I will not allow. My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, so that they may dwell with Me... [eternal life in the Family] ...he who walks in

a blameless way, he shall serve Me” (vs 5-6).

How do we serve God? *By not gossiping, not slandering!* Not being a talebearer, backbiter, or whisperer! Etc.! Etc.! all the things that won't be on the Sea of Glass or in the Kingdom.

Verse 7: “**He who works deceit...**”

Someone who prides himself on being able to manipulate things. These are all cousins: self-deception is a horrible sin, a horrible state to find yourself in. self-righteousness is a horrible state to find yourself in, because it takes a lot to get your attention, to get you to understand that you are that way; because we think we're okay. So, we go about hurting people.

“...shall not dwell within My house; He who tells lies shall not remain in My sight. Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, so that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD” (vs 7-8).

They won't be there! They're not going to be there! Who will be there?

Psalm 15:1: “LORD, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell upon Your Holy hill?... [we're striving to do] ...**He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the Truth in his heart**” (vs 1-2).

If you're gossiping about someone, as James said, it's all about your lust, evil intension, hurting, conflict, aggression, trying to hurt, stab or murder your brother. Is that the truth that is in his heart?

Verse 3: “**He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor**, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor.”

How would you take up a reproach against your neighbor?

Hey, I want to tell you something, but it's okay because I want to tell you in confidence.

If you say that in confidence you're okay. *NO! It doesn't say that!*

Verse 4: “In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD...”

Instead, talking about them, putting them down, hurting them, slandering them, stabbing them, hurting their reputation. *They may not be able to recover!* Hopefully they will, and we'll see how we do that.

“...he who swears to his own hurt and does not change it” (v 4). *God does not change!*

Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ *is* the same

yesterday, and today, and forever.”

James 1:17: “...the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning.”

God talks about He doesn't change, and He doesn't want us to change, but be upright and righteous, and we will be in the house of God in His tabernacle.

Psalm 15:5: “He who has not put out his money at usury... [a straight shooter] ...nor has he taken a bribe against the innocent...”—*favoring another person in a decision!*

God's Word is the same for everyone! If you have a really close friend that you really like and they have done something, and as an elder you have to keep the flock from something that's going on—because we're responsible—God tells us to do that. But you don't really want to do that because it's your friend, but you still have to do it. It says not to be ‘a respecter of persons.’

God's Word is God's Word! It applies to me and to you—all of us.

“...He who does these things shall never be moved” (v 5)—*plus be in the house of God in His Tabernacle on the Sea f Glass!*

Matthew 12:36: “But I say to you, for every idle word...”

- think about God's Laws
- think about the principles
- think about the other person
- think about loving the other person

*All that's in your mind before you speak!*

“...that men may speak, they shall be held accountable in *the* Day of Judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned” (vs 36-37).

WOW! Quite a warning for us! Quite a warning to watch out for what we say! Be careful, speak in love and put it away from yourself. Put it out! Think about what we say before we say it, and say it in love!

- Do you really love that person?
- Why are you talking about them?

Think! Process it! Think about it! Ask God to help you love everyone and support everyone. Forebear! They said something about you, or maybe you didn't like what they did. We're to forbear. It talks about that in Matt. 5, and we will read about how Christ expects us to handle those things.

Ephesians 4:30: “And do not vex [grieve] the Holy Spirit of God by which you have been

sealed for *the* day of redemption.”

Don't quench it! In 1-Thess. 5 it talks about 'quenching the spirit.' Don't shut it down, let it flow! Get rid of the obstacles, the impediments, the desire to gossip about somebody.

Verse 31: "Let all bitterness..."

That's what happens, it develops into a 'root of bitterness.' Start out and you continue to talk about a person and it gets worse and worse. Now you have a group together and you all agree, all talking about it and pretty soon the 'root of bitterness' is so deep you can't get rid of it, and you won't be in the Tabernacle of God.

"...and indignation, and wrath... [anger] ...and clamor..." (v 31).—*saying things that you just can't help!* You just spout off without thinking because you're angry. You're an angry person. You just anger at something and one of things that comes out is gossip.

**"...and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice; and be kind and tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you"** (vs 31-32).

So, if we expect to be forgiven, we have to forgive others. When we love them we don't talk about them. We're careful that we're not breaking the commandments.

Exodus 20:16: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

So many places it talks about saying something and you haven't checked it out. It's an accusation is what it is; it's a bearing of false witness. It's harming and hurting that person. But that's not true! *Even if it is true, go to that person, don't talk about them!*

Verse 13: "You shall not murder."

- What is gossip? *It's murder!*
- What did we see with the shot fired around the world?
- What happened after that? *World wars where millions were killed!*

Verse 14: "You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house...." (vs 14-17).

When you think that somebody else has more than you, and you want what they have, then you talk about them and put them down. *If you put somebody down it puts you up! **You think it does! In our mind we think it does! IT DOESN'T!*** We're

not supposed to speak evil of one another.

2-Timothy 3:1 [transcriber's correction]: "Know this also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come.**"

Isn't that true? *And they're going to get worse!* Then it talks about Satan's activity and the air is more surcharged. We have to guard even more, and draw closer to God to fight against these urges to do things and to hurt people; to put them down; to 'murder' them.

Verse 2: "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts... [elevating themselves] ...proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection... [without the love of God] ...implacable, slanderers, without self-control..." (vs 2-3).

Process it! Put it in your mind and let it process through the Holy Spirit. Think about it and think in love, and 99% of the time we probably won't say it.

"...savage, despisers of those who are good" (v 3)—*we've seen that!* That is where most of this gossip comes from.

Look at the corporate world, but it happens in the Church as well, which is a real shame.

Verse 4: "Betrayers... [Have you ever felt betrayed] ...reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having **an outward appearance of Godliness...** [right here in the Body of Christ] ...but denying the power of *true* Godliness. *But as for you, turn away from all these*" (vs 4-5). *In other words, don't have anything to do with them!*

If somebody comes up and starts to gossip, politely say, 'No thank you; I don't want to hear it. Don't bring that around me.' **"...But as for you, turn away from all these."**

Verse 6: "For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses..."

There are a lot of warnings for us. We are told to put it away from us in so many places. Peter talks about this, as well.

1-Peter 2:1: "Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies... [Isn't this where all this comes from] ...and all slanders, as newborn babes, yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow" (vs 1-2).

Do people wonder sometimes why they're not growing?

Things just don't seem to work. I pray and ask

God for healing, or for something else and it seems like He's not listening.

I had a guy tell me that God had turned away from Him, and he was mad at God. Hmmm! God's Word is like a mirror. You look at it and it reflects back. It convicts and cuts both ways. If we're open-minded and wanting to hear, wanting to change, wanting to love our neighbor and be in God's Kingdom and in His Family, we'll take that examination and take it seriously.

Verse 3: "If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. To Whom coming, *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious, you also, as living stones... [just like Christ] ...are being built up *as* a spiritual house—a Holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, **acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**" (vs 3-5).

We're to imitators, transformed by Christ. Christ wasn't like this; He didn't do that. He loved everyone! He was tender, lowly, and He's our example. He didn't sin at all!

How do we handle that when it comes at us? Remember the three and we're the one that maybe gets it, or the brunt of it. Hopefully we're not the one giving it, and we're not the one listening to it, because it kills all three.

- What happens when we find out that we've been the brunt or the subject of gossip?
- What do we do?

*The best place to look at is what Christ tells us! Actually, Christ's example!* This is Christ's first sermon and it tells us how to treat one another and how to make into the Tabernacle and Family of God. To be eternal and like God, *to become perfect!* To have the love that God wants us to have for our brothers.

Matthew 5:11: "Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake." *You'll be blessed!*

*It talks about forbearing;* v 9: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God."

You don't retaliate in kind! Let it go, be a peacemaker. Put it in God's hands; let God fight the battles for you. Then you continue to be in a good relationship with God, focusing on Him and focusing on our selves. What is it that I need to do?

Don't worry about what other people do. You can't really do anything about that anyway. You pray for them, that they'll understand and they

will stop. That they, too, will be in the Kingdom of God, because we want everyone... *God doesn't want anyone to perish! He wants everyone to be there!*

We're to be peacemakers when these things happen to us. We've talked about those that 'whisper.' I see this from time to time and I've been the brunt of that. People are whispering and they stop when they see you coming. They didn't realize that you were there and then they go back to whispering.

Psalm 41:7: "All who hate me whisper against me; they plot evil against me. They say, 'A wicked thing is poured out upon him, and he who lies down shall rise no more.' Even a man, my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (vs 7-9).

Proverbs 16:27: "An ungodly man digs up evil..."

- What does he do when he digs it up?
- Does he just bury it again? *No!*

"...and his lips *are* like a burning fire. A perverse man causes strife... [What did we start out with?] ...and a whisperer separates chief friends" (vs 27-28).

- that's not being a friend
- that's not loving your brother/sister

That's the identifier of the sons of God! When someone is doing that they're not a son of God, or at least they're not letting the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them. *We need to pray for those people!*

Gossip is a way to make one's self feel better, to build one's self-esteem. It's not based on God; it's based on the other side of the aisle. They make themselves feel important and elevate themselves.

We saw what Satan was doing (Isa. 14), elevating himself. He said, 'I will do this....' many times. They want the people who are listening to know that:

- they are 'well-connected'
- they are 'in the know'
- that they are well informed
- that they are in the group
- they have a group and this other person isn't part of that group

You've seen chickens in a yard and one of them has a sore on his back, they will literally pick that chicken to death. They will pick, *pick, pick* until it kills him.

They're well-connected and in the know, and it's a way for them to vent their frustrations out

on others. Unconsciously, vent our own frustrations about ourselves. If you really look at what it's all about, Christ talks about that:

Matthew 15:16: "But Jesus said to him, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not perceive that everything that enters the mouth goes into the belly, and is expelled into *the sewer*? But the **things that go forth from the mouth come out of the heart...** [that's where they originate] **...and these defile the man.** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing *and* blasphemies. **These are the things that defile the man;** but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man'" (vs 16-20). ***Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks!***

- we're supposed to be circumcised in the heart.
- we're supposed to have that love for one another

What is the opposite of gossip? We saw in Matt. 22:36-40 that we are to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and our neighbor as our self. Let's look in John and the final prayer of Christ and the apostles were listening.

John 15:9: As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love. If you keep My commandments..." (vs 9-10).

We saw all those listed in a different way, and warnings that proceed out of an evil heart.

"...you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and that your joy may be full" (vs 10-11).

If you're a gossip and you're somebody who puts people down constantly... If I did that constantly, I wouldn't have any joy in my life. I wouldn't have the peace of Christ that He leaves for us. I would be tormented, uneasy, open to all sorts of negative attacks through the air. I would not be a 'happy camper.'

We see a lot of people are not 'happy campers.' When we get our conscious clean through repentance, obedience and asking for forgiveness and overcoming the sins that we have, ***then we're happy and we have the joy of Christ!***

Verse 12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 12-14). ***That's how we are showing love to one another!***

1-Peter 4:15: "Assuredly, let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, **or as an overlording busybody** in other people's lives."

A busybody is going around getting information to dump on someone else. Or to takeover someone else. They look like they 'know something.' That they're 'in the know.' People are hurt by that.

Verse 16: "Yet, if anyone *is suffering* as a Christian, he should not be ashamed; but let him glorify God because of this, for the time *has come for judgment* to begin with the household of God; and if it first *begins* with us, what *will be* the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?" (vs 16-17).

Notice that 'busybodies' are included in there with murders and thieves; people who will not be there.

Proverbs 11:13: "A talebearer is a revealer of secrets, but one who is of a faithful spirit keeps the matter hidden."

One who reveals secrets, or what they think are secrets, they're really speaking without knowledge. But they tell it as a secret. They whisper.

Proverbs 18:8: "The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

Proverbs 20:9: "Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin'?"

2-John 1:10: "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not say to him, 'Welcome!'"

### **GOSSIP:**

- kills relationships
- is a form of murder
- hurts others
- is not loving
- hurts family
- hurts friends

***Even corporate cultures understand this!***

God wants us to be loving and not go around as gossipers. Evil gossip kills. It carries the potential of causing catastrophes, harm and also tearing asunder families and friendships.

- Don't listen to gossip!
- Don't gossip!

When you do fall prey to it, pray for those people, and ask God to help them stop hurting and

devouring one another, but have love for one another.

If someone comes to you and has some 'juicy' information about someone else, don't listen. Politely excuse yourself, change the subject, or explain why you are not interested in listening.

If you're in Christ, we are to walk in newness of life. Start today! Examine yourself:

I need to start today, I need to be careful and guard my mind. I need to love God and out of the abundance of that love, that heart, then those things will be spoken: words that will praise, glorify, uplift. Good things that you can say for others, about others, not negative things.

- elevate the other people
- edify the other people

They're your brothers/sisters and they're going to be with you for eternity. We're one Body in Christ; Jesus is not divided.

Nothing can bring us down if we remain in Christ. We have some rough times coming, so we have to stick together. Love one another as Christ said. Read John 14-17.

Gossip is not found in the Bible, but the results are! The warnings are! Gossip is the opposite side of the aisle from loving God. Let's be careful, we need to guard ourselves and our tongues, as James says.

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) James 4:1-3
- 2) Isaiah 59:2
- 3) James 4:3-7
- 4) Proverbs 4:23
- 5) James 4:8, 26
- 6) Romans 4:17
- 7) Leviticus 19:8-18
- 8) Matthew 22:36-40
- 9) Psalm 101:5-8
- 10) Psalm 15:1-4
- 11) Hebrews 13:8
- 12) James 1:17
- 13) Psalm 15:5
- 14) Matthew 12:36-37
- 15) Ephesians 4:30-32
- 16) Exodus 20:16, 13-17
- 17) 2 Timothy 3:1-6
- 18) 1 Peter 2:1-5
- 19) Matthew 5:11, 9
- 20) Psalm 41:7
- 21) Proverbs 16:27-28
- 22) Matthew 15:16-20
- 23) John 15:9-14

- 24) 1 Peter 4:15-17
- 25) Proverbs 11:13
- 26) Proverbs 18:8
- 27) Proverbs 20:9
- 28) 2 John 1:10

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 4:4
- Ephesians 2:2
- John 17
- 1 Corinthians 15; 1:26
- Romans 8
- Philippians 2:5
- Psalm 133
- 1 Thessalonians 5
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- John 14-17

#### Also referenced: Article"

*How Many Wars are Going on Right Now?*  
November 17, 2013  
{<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/many-wars-going-right-now/>}

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