

Respectable Sins

Turning Up the Heat on Sins that Fly Under the Radar

Gossip and Slander

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Peter LaRuffa, Feb. 13, 2011

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruits.” Proverbs 18:21

We tend to reduce gossip and slander to obvious examples, and that’s why these two sins go either unnoticed or are accepted – respected – if they show their faces in other forms.

Gossip – speaking about a person’s faults to someone else who cannot do anything about it.

Slander – speech that unnecessarily paints someone in a bad light.

*“They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are **gossips, slanderers**, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents...”
Rom. 1:29-30*

Gossip & slander are detrimental to our relationships with one another.

“A dishonest man spreads strife, and **a whisperer separates close friends.**” Prov. 16:28

“Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but **he who repeats a matter separates close friends.**”

Prov. 17:9

“The north wind brings rain, and a **backbiting tongue, angry looks.**”

Prov. 25:23

“Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; **And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.**”

Prov. 26:20

Indulging in gossip feeds our egos.

1 Tim. 5:13

Matt. 12:36

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

Ephesians 4:29

We often excuse talking to family or close friends about a problem when it's really gossip; we think "Blood is thicker than Bible."

It's wise and good for couples to speak to each other, to bounce things off of one another, to share what's on their hearts for the other to hear, understand, pray, help, etc.; but that doesn't apply to every member of the family.

If someone is not a direct part of the solution, they shouldn't know about the problem.

"If your brother sins, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." Matt. 18:15

God wants us to operate on a "need to know" basis when it comes to matters between people, and his definition of "need to know" might be more conservative than you wish it was.

Here at Grace, we're particularly susceptible to the "last church bash."

Is there a certain joy, a certain satisfaction, and a certain personal pat on the back you give yourself when you speak of your old church?

Is your motive to give glory to God for what He's done in your life, or is it simply another opportunity to throw the last place under the bus?

Are you unnecessarily painting people in a bad light?

If this is an area where you're sinning – there's good news for you. God pardons, forgives, and gives us grace to please Him in this and all areas of life.

Three Questions to Keep Our Tongues in Check...

Question #1: Is what I'm about to say going to build up someone?

Words that Please God:

- pertain to the listener's good,
- pertain to the listener's well-being
- pertain to the glory of God

Question #2: Is what I'm about to say necessary?

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.” Prov. 10:19

Do I need to say what I'm about to say, or do I just want to say it just to be heard?

Question #3: Is what I'm about to say going to impart grace?

Is there a grace-based motivation to what I'm about to say?

Will someone be blessed as a result of what I say?

If not, what should I say?

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:14