

Playing With Fire

No Offense, But... - Part 2

March 16, 2025

Sparks don't always stay sparks. They can start fires.

Gossip = speaking negatively about someone to someone else who's not part of the problem or the solution.

What if gossip isn't just a bad habit but a potential wildfire?

"⁵ ... The tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. ⁶And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself." James 3:5-6 (NLT)

"The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences." Proverbs 18:21 (NLT)

"A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends." Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." Ephesians 4:29 (NLT)

Are your words constructive or destructive?

*"I pray that they will all be **one**, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us **so that the world will believe you sent me**." John 17:21 (NLT)*

According to Jesus:

Our unity validates our message to the world.

When gossip sparks, put it out.

Responsibility #1 - Don't gossip.

"Should I be sharing this? Or should I be bringing this directly to the person who I'm in conflict with?"

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense." Matthew 18:15 (NLT)

Don't spiritualize gossip as venting or a prayer request. Without a plan to resolve it, you're just gossiping.

Responsibility #2 - Don't tolerate gossip.

If someone starts gossiping to you, lovingly interrupt it.

*"Wrongdoers eagerly **listen** to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander." Proverbs 17:4 (NLT)*

"Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops." Proverbs 26:20 (NLT)

When gossip sparks, put it out.

Additional Great Passages on Gossip:

"¹⁰I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose. ¹¹For some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹²Some of you are saying, 'I am a follower of Paul.' Others are saying, 'I follow Apollos,' or 'I follow Peter,' or 'I follow only Christ.' ¹³Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not! ¹⁴I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵for now no one can say they were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't remember baptizing anyone else.) ¹⁷For Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech, for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power." 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 (NLT)

"If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless." James 1:26 (NLT)

"Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart." Proverbs 18:8 (NLT)

"²⁹Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful." Romans 1:29-30 (NLT)

"For I am afraid that when I come, I won't like what I find, and you won't like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorderly behavior." 2 Corinthians 12:20 (NLT)

"And if they are on the list, they will learn to be lazy and will spend their time gossiping from house to house, meddling in other people's business and talking about things they shouldn't." 1 Timothy 5:13 (NLT)