



FEATHERS IN THE WIND

IF YOU DON'T SAY IT, THEY CAN'T REPEAT IT! In a small German village, a woman differed with her minister and became so angry that she began spreading ugly and malicious rumors about him around town. One day, overcome by remorse, she came and begged him to forgive her. « And, Pastor, please tell me how I can make amends. »

The pastor sighed, « Take one pillow and come with me to the church bell tower. » At the top of the church, he asked her to tear open the pillow

and to wave it in the air. The wind carried the feathers away quickly all over the place, over the roofs, in the parks, in people's gardens, even as far as the highway. Then the pastor sadly smiled and said : « Now, to realize how much harm is done by gossip, please go and collect all your feathers. »

« *But that is not possible!* » the woman said with a choking cry. *"The wind has carried most of them away!* » *"So it is with your words,"* the minister said. *"While I have gladly forgiven you, do not forget that you can never undo the damage your untrue words have done."*

Once the feathers of gossip are scattered into the wind, it is impossible to retrieve all of them. The damage is done and the scar will remain.

Like a wildfire, gossip can spread rapidly and cover a great many people in a short amount of time, whether these rumors are true or not.

A Definition of Gossip : *Rumor or talk of an intimate nature that is personal and sensational. Something spoken by a person who habitually spreads intimate or private rumors or facts. The words that stand out are "personal", "sensational", "rumors" and "spreads."*

The sin of gossiping - how easily committed! What does God say about this evil?

Proverbs 26:22 says: *"The words of a talebearer are as wounds"* and Proverbs 17:9 says : *"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."*

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." James 3:8.

« *Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbling.* » Proverbs 20:19

"If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless" (James 1:26). Jesus said that "on the day of Judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak" (Matthew 12:36).

We would do well to heed these biblical warnings.

Gossip grieves God. God calls upon believers to cease finding fault, to cease making hasty, unkind speeches. A thorough reformation is needed in the body of believers. Let it begin at once. Let not your ears listen to gossip from any one. If all would refuse to hear evil tales, the fire would soon be extinguished.

The disposition to gossip, which is so wide-spread, is displeasing to God. If those who indulge in unkind criticism or idle talk could realize that an angel of God is noting down their words, and that all are to appear against them in the Judgment, they would be far more careful as to what is entered on that book of records.

Walk Away From Gossip. Those who listen to gossip are just as guilty as those who are spreading it, for if there is no audience, there will be no one to tell or as the Bible says, *"For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases"* (Proverbs 26:20). If everyone who began to hear gossip walked away, then the fire would go out. If there is no one to listen, then there will be no one to tell the juicy tale.

- Gossip reveals a lack of true goodness of heart
- *"Blessed are the peacemakers,"* Jesus taught, *"for they will be called sons of God"*. (Matthew 5 :9)
- Be impeccable with your word. Speak with integrity. Avoid using your word to gossip about others, but rather use the power of your word in direction of truth and love.
- Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people .
Eleanor Roosevelt

Let's sift our words through God's grid:

"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.... " (Ephesians 4:29)

« Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

*whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,
think on these things. » Philippians 4:8*