

Beat: News

True Love Covers Faults And Failures

Gossip Is Sin

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USPA NEWS - “The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Proverbs 18:8”

Gossip is sin, and it is cruel and painful sin. Spreading news about a person can ruin a reputation and destroy friendships.

True love covers faults and failures; telling them is hateful wickedness. Protect others by keeping secrets to yourself and by silencing tattlers.

God hates talebearing, which is telling things about another person that should be kept private. It does not matter if the things are true or not. If they are not true, then telling is slander; if they are true, then it is talebearing. If there is not a very strong reason from God or an authority to disclose a personal matter, then keep negative information buried.

Talebearers spread private news about others; they are cruel and wicked. God considered this proverb important enough to repeat it (Pr 26:22). Learn the rule. Solomon also wrote, “A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter”^[1] (Pr 11:13). And, “He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets”^[2] (Pr 20:19).

Gossip and tattling at home and school used to be punished, for men once knew God’s law. He condemned talebearing by Moses in 1531 B.C. (Lev 19:16). Talebearing is the same as backbiting, tattling, and whispering in the Bible, four sins that are condemned as wickedness (Pr 16:28; 26:20-26; Ps 15:3; Rom 1:29-30; II Cor 12:20; I Tim 5:13).

Mothers used to say, “If you cannot say something good about another person, then say nothing at all about them.”^[3] This is precious advice from a generation that feared God and knew Bible wisdom. If only good and positive things were shared about others, just think how loving and unifying that would be for families, businesses, churches, and nations!

Talebearing hurts the reputation of the person with the private fault, sin, or event being told; it also hurts the person hearing the report, for it damages his opinion of his friend. The effects of this common sin are very destructive with deep, long-lasting consequences. The damage and pain occurs in the most inner parts, the heart and the soul (Pr 20:27,30).

Once you reveal private information, what can you do? It is near impossible to correct your sin. You cannot take back words you foolishly or maliciously let out of your mouth. Those that heard you cannot totally erase what you told them, no matter how much you ask them to try. You have wounded the character and reputation of another; you have undermined friendship or unity by revealing private information about others. This is sin!

This sin is the rape of a man or woman’s name and person, which can last a lifetime, so the Bible warns against it often. Learn this lesson of noble character and never violate it. Never say anything critical of others, unless you have to for godly or authority reasons. Think positive things about others, so negative words never come out (Matt 12:34-37).

A talebearer tells secrets (Pr 11:13; 20:19). He, or often she, cannot keep the news to himself. He wants to spread it to damage the character and standing of another person or to gratify curiosity and be perceived as an informed person. Both motives are from hell! If you have a concern about another person, tell it to them alone (Pr 25:9; Matt 18:15).

What should you do, if a person starts to gossip in your presence? Solomon wrote, “The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue”^[4] (Pr 25:23). You should first get angry to show them that you do not approve at all. If that does not work, tell them they are wrong. If they persist, then get away and stay away.

This proverb does not prevent informing an authority about a crime or potential crime. Calling the police about suspicious activities is not talebearing. Reporting a crime is not talebearing. Those in authority have a need for information. Only a little wisdom should see the huge difference between talebearing and helping authority (Gen 37:2; I Cor 1:11).

Love is an important part of the Christian religion (Col 3:12-15), and love will only do what is in the best interest of other persons, including keeping personal information secret (Pr 10:12; 17:9; I Pet 4:8). Love of others, their reputations, and their friendships should put a guard on your tongue. Your goal should be to build them up, not tear them down.

Many claim to be Christian, but the real evidence and proof is not in words, but in actions (Jas 2:14-20). True Christianity is more a lifestyle than a creed. And the single greatest evidence of Christianity is not faith, but love (Jn 13:34-35; I Cor 13:13). Love shows the greatest change in a person. God declared that a person learning to love others correctly, like never backbiting or talebearing, is greater than an apostle (I Cor 12:31; 13:1-7).

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