

Sins of the Tongue - Supplement

“I said, I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me” (Psalm 39:1)

Introduction

1. In Lesson Four, we briefly describe many of the sins of the tongue identified in the Bible.
2. Often, these brief descriptions leave the Bible student craving a deeper understanding for application and discernment of these sins in every-day life.
3. In this supplement, we offer a deeper explanation to aid in these efforts.

Discussion

I. Gossip

- A. Gossip can be distinguished from innocent conversation by three overlapping qualities pertaining to the transmission of information: What, How, Why?
 1. **What** is being discussed: Is the information of a personal nature that the subject would consider private?
 - a. Proverbs 11:13: Does it exploit another person’s personal issues?
 - b. Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 26:20: Hence the name, “Talebearer.”
 2. **How** the information is communicated: Is it secretly delivered.
 - a. Gossip generally shares personal information or actions in hushed tones or in deliberately private or secluded settings.
 - b. Proverbs 16:28: Hence the name “whisperer.”
 - c. An obvious red flag is when the sharer begins with phrases such as, “Don’t tell anyone I said this, but...”
 - d. NOTE: This is different from sharing your own business by saying, “Can I share something with you in confidence?”
 3. And **Why** the information being shared: Intent often differentiates sinful vs. innocent actions.
 - a. Gossip often comes as sensational subject matter intended to satisfy a carnal desire to know about personal issues.
 - b. Proverbs 18:8: Hence the description, “juicy morsal.”
 - c. Gossip generally portrays personal information in a negative or critical light.
 - d. Information shared can be innocent or sinful depending on motivation:
 - i. Asking how a person is doing with a genuine desire for their wellbeing. “How is _____ doing?” “They are struggling right now.” “Oh, what’s going on?” “I can’t share that right now, but please keep them in your prayers.”
 - ii. Versus a desire to exploit or expose personal information. “So what’s going on with _____?” “You won’t believe what’s happening now.” “Oh! Tell me more.”
- B. Common Motivations for Gossip:
 1. The feeling of importance in knowing or having inside details.
 2. The urge to assess and evaluate others as a determining factor of how to treat them.
 3. Amusement, entertainment, the thrill of drama and the shock-and-awe effect.
 4. The desire to make an impression, often leading to exaggeration of details, embellishment, or selective storytelling.

5. Even truthful information becomes gossip when it bears one or more of these qualities.

II. Harm done by Gossip:

- A. The speaker:
 1. Bears the guilt of talebearing.
 2. Proves one untrustworthy.
 3. Causes one to be spiritually corrupt.
 4. Violates the imperative to love one's neighbor.
- B. The listener: Not just hearer, but listener, readily receiving information.
 1. Entices to judge with corrupt and unjust judgment.
 2. 2 Thess. 3:11: Entices to engage and share gossip with others.
 3. 2 Tim. 2:17; Prov. 18:8: Encourages insidious emotional, psychological, and spiritual qualities that act like poison and cancer that eats at the soul.
- C. The person who is the topic:
 1. Disclosure of personal/private information.
 2. Unnecessarily harms reputation.
 3. Because information is often shared with a grain of truth flavored with heaps of false, inaccurate, or twisted information, it often paints the subject in an unjust and inappropriate light.
- D. The community as a whole:
 1. Prov. 16:28; 16:20: Gossip stirs up and fuels strife.
 2. James 3:16: This type of behavior invites "every evil thing."