

Gossip — Day 1



Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#171) — KJV

Proverbs 17:9 "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."

Titus 3:2 "To speak evil of no man..." **1 Peter 2:17** "Honour all men...." **Proverbs 18:8** "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly."

♥ Apply the Promise!

*Repeating gossip and spreading rumors causes deep, terrible pain and destroys friendships.
He wants us to be honest, gentle, and loving with our words.*

Bible Story (Nehemiah 6)

God's people had returned to Jerusalem after many years away from their homeland. But the city was still weak and broken. The walls had been torn down, and the people needed help, protection, and courage.

Nehemiah traveled to Jerusalem to rebuild the broken walls of the city. God had given him a serious work to do, but not everyone was happy about it. Men named Sanballat and Tobiah mocked him, threatened him, and tried many ways to stop the work.

When the wall was almost finished, Sanballat tried a different plan. He sent Nehemiah an open letter. Because the letter was open, other people could read it too.

The letter was filled with false rumors. Sanballat claimed that people were saying Nehemiah wanted to rebel against the king and make himself ruler in Jerusalem. None of this was true. Sanballat hoped the rumors would frighten Nehemiah so he would stop building and defend himself.

But Nehemiah did not let the false report control him. He answered simply and firmly, "No such things as you say are being done. You are making them up in your own heart."

Then Nehemiah prayed, "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands." He did not chase every rumor or argue with every enemy. He kept doing the work God had given him. Nehemiah's choice teaches us how to handle gossip. False words can frighten, distract, and hurt people, but we do not have to spread them or live under them. We can answer truthfully, pray for strength, and keep doing what is right.

True Story

During the American Revolutionary War, General George Washington was working incredibly hard. He was trying to lead his tired army and build a brand-new, free country.

His political enemies knew they could not easily beat him in a fair battle. So, they decided to use malicious rumors! The enemy printed a small pamphlet of fake letters and loudly told everyone that George Washington had personally written the secret messages.

The fake letters claimed Washington was secretly a traitor. The vicious rumors said he actually hated America and deeply wanted the British enemy to win!

Washington knew the letters were made up. He did not panic, and he did not quit his important job to fiercely argue with the liars. He chose to completely ignore the gossip.

Washington kept bravely leading his men, completely ignored the hurtful lies, and eventually won the entire war!

Years later, the false letters were still being brought up against him. Washington had to publicly deny them and explain that they were forgeries. The gossip had been invented, but it continued to cause trouble long after it began.

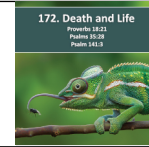
This shows why rumors are so harmful. A false story can travel far, hurt someone's reputation, and keep causing damage for years. God wants us to be careful with what we repeat. Before we share something about another person, we should ask: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

Discussion Questions:

- What weapon did Sanballat use when he realized he couldn't stop Nehemiah with physical force?
- What did George Washington do when his enemies printed fake letters to spread terrible rumors about him?
- Proverbs 17 says that repeating a matter separates friends. What should you do if someone tries to tell you a juicy rumor or piece of gossip about a classmate?

Activity:

Have a child hold a paper plate and deliberately spill a pile of craft glitter in the center. Challenge them to use their fingers to pick up every single speck and put it perfectly back into the container without leaving any trace behind. It is completely impossible! Explain that gossip is exactly like glitter. Once a rumor spreads, it sticks to everything and can never be fully cleaned up!



Today's Promise (#172) — KJV

Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."

Psalm 35:28 "And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long."

Psalm 141:3 "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

Apply the Promise!

The things we say can either bring beautiful life, truth, and peace, or they can cause fear, deception, and destruction. God promises to help us put a strict "guard" on our lips so we only speak life!

Bible Story (2 Samuel 15)

King David was the ruler of Israel, but his son Absalom secretly wanted the throne. Absalom knew he could not simply walk into the palace and take the kingdom. So he used a quieter weapon: harmful words.

Every morning, Absalom stood near the city gate where people came to ask the king for help. When someone arrived with a problem, Absalom would speak kindly at first. He acted as if he cared deeply about them.

Then he quietly planted doubt about King David. He told the people that their cause was good, but no one from the king was there to hear them properly. Then he would say that if only he were judge, he would make sure everyone received justice.

Absalom bowed, kissed people, and made them feel important. But his words were not honest love. He was using kindness on the outside to spread disloyalty underneath.

Little by little, Absalom turned many hearts away from David. His whispering and flattery divided the kingdom and brought great sorrow to his family and the nation.

Absalom's story shows how dangerous gossip can be. Gossip does not always sound cruel at first. Sometimes it sounds like concern, sympathy, or helpful information. But when our words make people distrust others, take sides, or think evil without knowing the truth, they can do deep harm.

God wants our speech to heal, not divide. Before we repeat something about another person, we should ask whether our words are true, kind, necessary, and helpful.

True Story

On October 30, 1938, actor Orson Welles helped direct a radio play called *The War of the Worlds*. It was a science fiction story about creatures from Mars landing on earth.

Instead of telling the story in a normal way, the actors performed part of it like breaking news. They used serious voices, sound effects, and pretend reporters to make the story feel real. Some listeners became confused, especially if they turned on the radio after the introduction and did not hear that it was only a play. They heard frightening reports about an invasion and wondered if something terrible was really happening.

Many people called radio stations, newspapers, or police departments to ask whether the broadcast was true. Later, newspapers made the panic sound even larger than it probably was, but the broadcast still showed how quickly frightening reports can spread.

Orson Welles's broadcast was not gossip in the usual sense, but it teaches an important lesson about careless or confusing words. When people hear a report and repeat it without knowing the truth, fear can grow quickly. One unclear story can turn into many frightened conversations when people pass it along too quickly.

This is why God wants us to be careful with our words. Before we pass along something frightening, shocking, or harmful, we should stop and ask, "Do I know this is true?" Truthful speech brings peace and safety, but careless reports can create fear and confusion.

Discussion Questions:

- What terrible rumors did Absalom spread about King David when people came asking for help?
- What were Orson Welles and his actors pretending was happening during their radio broadcast?
- Read Psalm 141:3 again. What does it mean to ask God to "set a watch" and keep the "door" of your lips?

Activity:

Set up a long, winding line of dominoes on a hard floor. Tell the children that the very first domino represents one small lie, false report, or scary rumor. Knock it over and watch the entire line fall! Discuss how Absalom's gossip and the fake radio broadcast quickly spread a chain reaction of chaos and destruction. We must diligently guard our mouths!



Today's Promise (#173) — KJV

Matthew 18:15–16 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

Apply the Promise!

The best way to solve a problem and stop gossip is to talk directly to the person who hurt you. If you bravely go to them in private instead of complaining to everyone else, you can save the friendship and honor God!

Bible Story (2 Samuel 12)

David was a man who loved God, but one day he made terrible choices. He sinned and tried to hide what he had done.

Since David was king, many people in the palace may have known something was wrong. It would have been easy for people to whisper, point fingers, and spread shameful stories about him.

But God did not use gossip to solve the problem. He sent the prophet Nathan to speak to David directly.

Nathan did not go into the streets and tell everyone about David's sin. He did not gather other people together to complain about the king. He went straight to David and spoke to him face-to-face.

Nathan told David a story about a rich man who stole a poor man's little lamb. When David became angry at the rich man in the story, Nathan said, "Thou art the man."

Nathan's words were brave and honest. He did not flatter David, but he also did not spread the matter around. He brought the truth directly to the person who needed to hear it.

David listened, confessed his sin, and repented before God.

Nathan's example teaches us that love does not gossip about someone's wrong. Love goes to the person privately, speaks truthfully, and seeks restoration. When we have a problem with someone, God wants us to talk to them in the right spirit instead of talking about them to others.

True Story

In 1993, the country of South Africa was going through a difficult time. A leader named Nelson Mandela was working hard to bring peace to his nation. But a military leader named General Constand Viljoen disagreed with him.

The General had a large army of men. Many people were worried he might start a war. People everywhere told Mandela to go on television and publicly speak out against the General. They wanted Mandela to loudly argue with him in front of the whole world.

But Mandela refused to spread angry words or argue in public. Instead of complaining to the news reporters, he made a surprising choice. Mandela secretly invited the General to his own house for a private meeting.

When General Viljoen arrived, Mandela warmly welcomed him inside. He poured the General a cup of tea, and the two men sat down to talk. They spoke quietly and respectfully, in person, without anyone else around to listen or gossip.

During their private conversation, they realized they could understand each other. That quiet meeting helped soften the situation and opened the way for peace. Instead of a public fight, there was a respectful conversation.

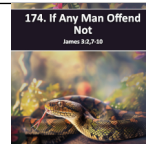
Mandela's choice gives us a practical lesson about gossip and conflict. When there is a problem, it is usually better to speak directly and respectfully to the person involved. Public arguments and angry talk can make trouble grow, but private, honest conversation can help bring understanding and peace.

Discussion Questions:

- What happened to King David's heart because Nathan confronted him face-to-face?
- What did Nelson Mandela do instead of arguing with the General on television?
- If a friend hurts your feelings today, what is the best way to handle it without using gossip?

Activity:

Have everyone sit together in a circle. Whisper a silly complaint into the first person's ear, like, "The king's purple sheep jumped over the wall." Have them whisper it down the line. The last person must announce the final phrase out loud. It will be completely wrong and distorted! Discuss how complaining to other people instead of the source always twists the truth. To solve problems, speak directly to them!



Today's Promise (#174) — KJV

James 3:2, 7–10 "...If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body... For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

Apply the Promise!

God warns us that our words can spread like a dangerous fire, but if we ask for His help, He will teach us to completely control our tongues.

Bible Story (Numbers 12)

Moses was the humble leader of Israel, but even he had to deal with the painful sting of gossip. One day, Moses's own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, grew jealous of his special relationship with God.

Instead of talking to Moses directly, they started whispering behind his back. They criticized his wife and said, "Has the Lord spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken also by us?"

Miriam and Aaron probably thought their murmuring session was a private secret. They thought a few whispered complaints would not hurt anyone. But the Bible gives a serious warning right in the middle of the story: "...and the Lord heard it."

God takes the sin of gossip very seriously. He called all three of them out to the tabernacle. The presence of God came down in a cloud, and He firmly corrected Aaron and Miriam for speaking against His servant.

When the cloud lifted, the sad punishment for their tongues was revealed. Miriam was covered in a white skin disease called leprosy. She was forced to leave the camp for seven days. As she sat outside, lonely and suffering, she realized how deeply her careless words had wounded her family.

Moses showed beautiful grace by crying out and begging God to heal the sister who had just betrayed him. Miriam and Aaron's words warn us to be careful how we speak about others. Instead of whispering complaints behind someone's back, we can pray, speak kindly, and go to the right person in the right spirit.

True Story

In October of the year 1871, a sad disaster struck the city of Chicago. A large fire broke out and quickly swept through the wooden buildings. The Great Chicago Fire sadly burned for three days, destroying thousands of homes and leaving many people without a place to live.

The citizens desperately wanted someone to blame. Almost immediately, an ugly, untrue rumor began to spread through the city. People started whispering that the fire was started by a poor Irish immigrant named Catherine O'Leary.

The rumor claimed that Mrs. O'Leary was carelessly milking her cow in the barn late at night, and the clumsy cow kicked over a lantern. The rumor spread faster than the fire itself.

Newspapers printed the false story, and the whole country believed it. Mrs. O'Leary was bullied and treated as a villain for the rest of her life. She died brokenhearted, hiding inside her house because she was so ashamed.

But the story was a complete lie! Mrs. O'Leary and her cow had nothing to do with starting the fire. They were fast asleep in bed when it began.

Years later, in 1893, a newspaper reporter named Michael Ahern finally confessed the truth. He admitted that he had made up the story about the cow just to sell more newspapers! Ahern's tiny, made-up lie became a very hurtful and uncontrollable rumor that ruined an innocent woman's life. Mrs. O'Leary's story shows how cruel gossip can be. A false story can travel far, hurt an innocent person, and keep doing damage long after it begins.

Discussion Questions:

- What was Miriam's terrifying punishment for using her tongue to speak against Moses?
- What famous, false rumor was spread about Catherine O'Leary and the Great Chicago Fire?
- James says the tongue is full of "deadly poison." How did a reporter's "tiny" lie act like a deadly poison to Mrs. O'Leary's life?

Activity:

Fill a clear glass with clean water. Tell the children that the clear water represents a person's good reputation. Take a bottle of dark food coloring (representing one tiny, whispered rumor) and drop exactly one drop into the glass. Watch how quickly the dark color spreads and completely infects the entire glass! Hand the child a spoon and challenge them to scoop the food coloring back out. Discuss how it is impossible to remove a rumor once it spreads!

Gossip — Day 5



🎵 Listen to
Scripture Song:



Today's Promise (#175) — KJV

James 4:11 "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge."

💖 Apply the Promise!

God warns us not to speak evil or spread rumors about each other, but to always protect the reputations of others with our words.

📖 Bible Story (Esther 3-7)

In the Persian Empire, King Ahasuerus promoted a proud man named Haman to be his very highest official. Haman demanded that everyone bow down to him. But a faithful Jewish man named Mordecai refused to bow to anyone except God.

Haman grew very angry. Instead of just speaking with Mordecai, Haman decided to hurt all of the Jewish people. He knew he needed the king's permission, so he used a sneaky weapon: slander.

Haman went to King Ahasuerus and began speaking evil. He secretly whispered lies and cleverly twisted the truth. He said, "There is a certain people scattered in your kingdom. Their laws are different, and they do not keep the king's laws. It is not good to let them live."

Notice what Haman did not say. He never mentioned that these people were peaceful. He never told the king that Mordecai had actually saved the king's life! He only shared twisted words to make them sound like enemies.

Because the king listened to this unfair gossip, he quickly signed a bad law to hurt the Jewish people. Thankfully, God used Queen Esther to bravely expose Haman's lies and save her people.

Haman's story shows how dangerous slander can be. When we twist facts, leave out important truth, or speak in a way that makes someone look worse than they are, we can cause deep harm. God wants our words to protect people's reputations, not secretly tear them down.

☀️ True Story

In August of 2012, at Osseo High School in Minnesota, a small group of students used an anonymous social media account to spread mean rumors. Hiding safely behind their computer screens, they posted hurtful lies about their own classmates. They made fun of people and actively tried to ruin reputations. The gossip was causing a lot of sadness.

Kevin Curwick was a high school senior and the captain of the school's football team. He was very tired of seeing his classmates get hurt by cyberbullying. Kevin knew that speaking evil of others was wrong and was slowly destroying the school's spirit.

Kevin decided to answer hurtful words in a different way. Instead of arguing online or repeating the gossip, he created a Twitter account called Osseo Nice Things. At first, he kept his identity secret.

Every time the bullies posted a nasty rumor about a student, Kevin would use his new page to post a beautiful, true compliment about that exact same person! He highlighted their hard work, praised their kindness, and celebrated their unique talents.

Something amazing happened. The students loved reading the uplifting, kind words so much that they stopped paying attention to the gossip page! Kevin's positive account quickly gained many followers, and the bullies were ignored. Kevin's choice gives us a better way to handle gossip. We do not have to repeat cruel stories, laugh at unkind posts, or help spread rumors. We can choose words that are true, kind, and helpful.

💬 Discussion Questions:

- What terrible lie did Haman tell the king about God's people?
- How were the bullies in Minnesota spreading slander about their classmates?
- What did Kevin Curwick do every time the bullies posted a mean rumor?

🎨 Activity:

Cut out a paper heart and have your child crumple it tightly to represent hearing mean gossip. Now, ask them to flatten the heart so it looks perfectly new again. They can't! Even when flattened, the deep wrinkle scars remain. Explain that apologizing is good, but slander leaves lasting hurts. We must protect our friends by choosing never to speak evil in the first place!