

Flattery and Gossip

Proverbs 20:19 Tattletell! Tattletell!" Remember yelling this phrase at your sisters or brothers when they told your parents about something you did? It is sad to say, but many of us have never outgrown the tattletell stage. We are still telling on people to others.

Do you know what gossip is? Gossip is sharing a bad report whether true or not with another person. How often have you heard a brother or sister in the Lord pass a bad report about someone? I always feel very awkward when this happens.

How should we respond to gossip? It is best not to listen to bad reports at all, but sometimes that is impossible when someone just blurts a report to you before you have a chance to gather your wits about you. The way I respond now is to say, "What you have shared may or may not be true about this person, but I choose to believe the best about him/her. Why don't we pray for this person right now." This usually will keep gossips away from you if you will consistently respond in this manner.

When we hear a bad report about someone, it is then very hard to erase that negative image of them from our minds. We are cautioned in the Bible not to speak evil of anyone, even if a person is truly evil. We are exhorted to speak only those things that edify and to only think of those things that are of good report, pure, virtuous, true and beautiful.

This proverb also warns us about flattery. I try to stay away from people who flatter. Now I love compliments, but some people are too profuse in their compliments, and this is flattery. Flattery occurs when we compliment others with the impure motive of gaining something from them or manipulating them in some way.

I must admit I have flattered my husband many times to build

him up before I make a request of him. This is manipulative, and I confess this as sin, for truly it is. Lord, forgive me.

Lord, forgive me for the times I have listened to negative reports about others. I recognize now that when I do this I am entertaining gossip. Forgive me also for the times I have flattered others with the impure motive of manipulating them. Help me to speak only those things that edify, to listen only to those things that minister grace to me and to refrain from manipulation through flattery. Purify my heart, O Lord, and my lips.

**READ: 2 Chronicles 33:14-34:33; Romans 16:8-27; Psalm 26:1-12;
Proverbs 20:19**