

How Some Christians Become the Devil's Minions

A friend of mine who pastors a growing church recently got a visit from a worried church member who said she had an important message from the Lord for him. When they met, the woman began to warn him about another woman in the church who, she claimed, was going to tear the church apart.

The pastor listened carefully and then asked a few questions. Had the woman in question said something derogatory to reveal her alleged evil intentions? What was she doing to tear the church apart? Was there proof? After all, the woman being accused was a supportive volunteer who seemed to get along with everyone.

The woman with the “word from the Lord” got defensive and said she knew she was right because she had “a gift of discernment.” She didn’t need to corroborate her story or provide concrete evidence. She just “knew.”

When the woman bringing this accusation was told she was out of bounds, she left the meeting in a huff—and then left the church because her super-spiritual insight was not received.

In this case, the woman who claimed to have a hotline to God did not have “discernment”—she was exhibiting a spirit of accusation. She had what I jokingly refer to as “the gift of suspicion.” Ironically, she is the one who is guilty of tearing the church apart.

Why do Christians treat each other like this? Why do we hurl unfounded accusations at others and then hide our malice under a robe of self-righteousness? If the devil went on a vacation for a month, I guess some Christians would gladly do his work while he’s away.

It would be a good idea, as we start this new year, to review the basic rules about gossip:

1. **Remember that the devil is the accuser.** Satan is called “the accuser of our brethren” in Revelation 12:10, and he hurls his accusations at us “night and day.” So it shouldn’t be surprising that sometimes we hear his accusations about others, and he tempts us to repeat them. If our hearts aren’t full of the love of God we will toss the devil’s grenades for him.

Do you honestly want to be on Satan’s side in spiritual warfare? You are fighting for his team when you spread negativity about others—even if your hateful indictments are cloaked in “God told me this while I was praying” smugness. Never align yourself with the accuser. Make sure your heart is free from unforgiveness, jealousy and hatred so you don’t end up being a minion of the devil.

2. **Never repeat something negative you’ve heard about someone unless you know it’s true.** There’s a reason we call gossip “juicy.” We like to hear negative things about others because it makes us feel better about ourselves. It feeds our flesh. Proverbs 26:22, in The Passion Translation, says: “Gossip is so delicious, and how we love to swallow it! For slander is easily absorbed into our innermost being.”

Gossip tastes sweet, but it will make you bitter. You don’t have to listen to it, and you certainly don’t have to repeat it. Turn a deaf ear to negative talk. Walk away from the water cooler when the conversation gets ugly. Tell gossipers you won’t listen to their toxic talk.

If you have God’s love in your heart, you won’t slander another person. Love covers negativity with mercy and kindness. Proverbs 17:9 (MEV) says: “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter

separates friends.”

This doesn't mean we don't confront sin. But if someone has wronged you, you should go to them privately and discuss it. Don't tell 12 people what happened so you can organize a jury. And don't post your experience on social media so you can gather sympathizers.

3. **When you hear something negative about someone, pray rather than prey.** James 4:11a (NIV) says: “Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another.” The word “slander,” *katalaleō* in the Greek, means, “to speak badly about someone so as to damage their reputation.” Spreading gossip about people is character assassination.

How do we respond to the temptation to gossip? The best way is to pray. One of my favorite authors of the last century, Leonard Ravenhill, wrote: “We never pray for folks we gossip about, and we never gossip about the folk for whom we pray.”

Prayer will supernaturally guard your heart from the seeds of hate that are hidden in a juicy morsel of gossip or a false accusation. Prayer will adjust your attitude, fill your soul with forgiveness and make sure that Satan, the ultimate accuser, has no foothold in your life. In 2018, make it your goal to always use your words to build people up, not tear them down.