

Warning to the Church: Gossip is Quenching the Fire of the Holy Spirit

Gossip is a sin that often hides in plain sight, yet it is one of the most damaging forces within the church today. As Proverbs 18:21 warns, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.” Words carry power, and gossip wields this power to divide, hurt and destroy, often without visible evidence until it’s too late.

As Richard Lorenzo Jr. notes, while some sins are obvious, like anger or fornication, gossip can sound innocent but leaves deep wounds behind the scenes. The spiritual root of gossip is particularly serious – Lorenzo points out that the Greek word for slanderer is *diabolos*, “the very same root word used for the devil.” This reveals that gossip is more than just talk; it is collaboration with the enemy’s kingdom.

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The damage of gossip extends far beyond broken relationships. James 3:6 describes the tongue as “a fire, a world of iniquity... set on fire by hell.” Gossip spreads like wildfire, assassinating reputations without any confrontation and fostering suspicion without evidence. Ministries and friendships have been splintered through unchecked gossip, and many people are wounded not by demons, but “by the unbridled mouth of believers,” Lorenzo says.



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The Bible provides clear instructions on how to deal with sin in the church. Lorenzo explains that Matthew 18:15-17 emphasizes if you see a brother or sister sinning, you should “go up to them one-on-one.” Public rebuke, especially online, is not supported by Scripture. Unfortunately, internet culture encourages viral videos and public accusations that often spread division rather than healing.

Gossip also exposes what is in our hearts. Lorenzo quotes Luke 6:45: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Bitterness, jealousy, insecurity and unresolved offense all fuel gossip. Often, it reflects more about our own inner wounds than the person we speak about.

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The culture of gossip breeds fear and suspicion, making people reluctant to be vulnerable. Those who talk about others frequently lose trust. As Lorenzo further says, this breaks down unity and replaces love with offense and suspicion, “creating a culture where people are afraid to be vulnerable.”

But there is a powerful remedy. Lorenzo cites Proverbs 26:20: “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.” The fire of gossip goes out when Christians refuse to participate. Lorenzo advises that when the temptation to speak negatively arises, we must “shut our mouth and walk away,” praying instead and choosing to “speak life over them.”

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Let this be a wake-up call: the words we speak either build up or tear down. As Lorenzo says, we must “nip gossip in the bud” and commit to nurturing an atmosphere where love reigns, and God’s kingdom is spread to all creation.

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