

DANGER: LIFE AHEAD!  
NAVIGATE WISELY.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, PART 3

GOSSIP: THE RESPECTABLE SIN

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and walk in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

2016-2-7



"Talking Points, Walking Points" is a publication of  
the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.



## Starter Question:

What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you?  
...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you?  
...and why?

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

- How often do you read *People Magazine*, *Us Weekly*, or similar tabloid? (Even while waiting for the cashier!)

Is it "gossip" if the person talked about is famous? Is it "gossip" if you don't know them personally?

- Tell us about an situation you've experienced personally in which someone was hurt by gossip (please change names and details so it's not just more gossip). Did you participate in some way?

Did you try to stop it, or to undo damage? If so, how did that turn out? If not, why didn't you?

- Open your Bibles to Romans 1:28-32, and discuss the following questions:  
Verse 28 says that God "gives idolaters over to a depraved mind, to do things which are not proper."  
List the twenty-one "improper actions" found in v. 29-31.

Try to group them (eg, actions vs attitudes; God-ward vs man-ward, etc.).

Now try to rank them in order of seriousness.

Which ones have you ever committed? Which ones do you routinely commit?

- Read Pastor Doug's comments on Proverbs 20:19 (point "5" in the Sermon Summary).  
Do you know someone who insists on gossiping? (Don't mention names—just a simple "yes/no".)  
Have you yet employed Pastor Doug's first four steps with that person? If so, how did it go?

If not—will you commit to doing so? How? When?

## Application-Challenge

Need help with gossip? Free, confidential counseling is available. Just write to: [Counseling@tcc.org](mailto:Counseling@tcc.org)

- Refuse to gossip. Don't go there. *Stop it!*
- Don't encourage others to gossip. Steer conversations in positive directions.
- Use your words to love and build others up rather than tear them down.

# Sermon Summary

Rumors and gossip circulate in the workplace, the neighborhood, organizations, and even at church. Gossip has become such a normal part of our social interaction that oftentimes we aren't even aware that we are engaging in it. When we share information that was meant to be kept confidential, we are in the wrong. The Bible would say that we are guilty of gossip. Why do we struggle so much with gossip? One reason may be our desire to feel important—and we feel important when we have information others don't have. But in many cases, there is another, more sinful motive driving our actions. It is a desire to feel superior, to build ourselves up at the expense of others.

What kind of activity falls under the Biblical prohibition of gossip? How do you know when you have entered the gossip zone? Before you say anything about someone not present, ask yourself this question: Would I say this if this person were here? If not, keep your mouth shut. If we would follow that one rule, 99% of what passes as gossip would be eliminated and we could avoid a whole lot of pain. If we are honest, most of us don't see gossip as a major sin, do we? To God, gossip is not a little sin. In Romans 1:28-31, gossip is linked with some pretty heinous sins. God doesn't like it. There is a reason the Bible comes down so heavily on gossip. It is because it can be so destructive. It is not something to be trifled with. Its effects can be devastating and irreversible. Gossip often involves betraying a confidence (Proverbs 11:13). It stirs up dissension and separates close friends (Proverbs 16:28). It fuels quarrels (Proverbs 26:20). It disseminates information which shouldn't be spread (1 Timothy 5:13).

## **God hates gossip, and so should we. What can we do to put out the fire of gossip?**

(1) Acknowledge gossip as sin. Until we see gossip for what it is, namely sin and a gross failure to love our neighbor, we will not be motivated to change our behavior. We must come clean and say, "Yes, God, I have a problem with gossip, and I want you to help me in this area."

(2) Refuse to be a party to destructive speech. This requires a great deal of discipline. My Dad used to say, "If you can't say something nice about someone, don't say anything at all." That is usually pretty good advice. But refusal to participate in destructive speech doesn't exhaust our Christian obligation to love our neighbor. No, we need to have a higher standard for our conversations. We need to set the example of gracious speech.

(3) Set an example of gracious speech (Ephesians 4:29-30). Refuse to speak negatively about anyone. To put out the fire of gossip, it really helps to set the example by modeling gracious speech.

(4) Encourage others to follow Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." If someone comes to you with gossip about another, point them back to the person with whom they are having the problem.

(5) Purposefully avoid those who incessantly gossip (Proverbs 20:19). Do you know anyone like that? There are some people, who no matter how hard you try to redirect a conversation in a positive way, continue to gossip. And no matter how hard you try to behave yourself, you find yourself being sucked in. Under such circumstances, sometimes it is best to avoid such people.

Although it is challenging to avoid gossip, change is possible with God's enabling power. Let's commit to watching our words.

## Upcoming

2/7	Middle School Student Worship	9:30-10:30am
2/7	High School Student Worship	11:15am-12:15pm
2/7	High School Acts Bible Study	6:00-8:00pm
2/8	PointMan Basketball	7:00-9:00pm
2/9	Middle School Echo Groups	6:30-8:15pm
2/10	AWANA	6:30-8:30pm
2/13	AWANA Bible Quiz	9:30am-1:00pm

# PARENTING

## CONFERENCE

Parenting is hard, but there are few things that rise to this level of importance. God has chosen parents to be primary instruments in the shaping of the human soul. So often we get it wrong by using power to make our children behave. We establish laws and then play the role of police officer and judge. A biblical view teaches that parenting is all about the exposure and change of a child's heart. Join your TCC Family and Paul David Tripp for a dynamic DVD-driven exploration of *Getting to the Heart of Parenting*. Permanent change only occurs when the heart of a person is changed by grace. February 19-20 (Friday evening and all day Saturday). For complete information, and to register, go to [tcc.org](http://tcc.org), keyword: parenting. *Don't miss it!*



## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**King David knew what it was like to be attacked by gossips! David cried out to the Lord: “They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks great things; who have said, “With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?” (see Psalm 12). When others assail us with their words, we find our refuge in God—but sometimes it’s our words which wound! What to do?**

**Monday**—Key Question: What do your words *reveal*?

- Read Luke 6:45. Your words reveal what’s in your heart.
- Read Proverbs 11:9 & 11; 12:18; 14:25; 15:4; 16:24 & 28; 18:21. Your words reveal your intent to hurt or to heal.
- Read Ecclesiastes 10:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:16; James 1:26; 3:1-6. Your words reveal your spiritual maturity.
- Read James 3:9-12; 1 Peter 3:8-10. Your words reveal your focus—God-ward or selfish?
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.

**Tuesday**—Key Question: **To whom** should you speak?

- Read James 1:5. First, speak with the Lord in order to gain his perspective.
- Read Matthew 7:1-5 and Romans 2:21. Next, speak with yourself, determining what changes you need to make in yourself.
- Read Proverbs 9:7-9; 19:25; 23:9. Speak with the wise, not the foolish scoffer.
- Read Proverbs 11:13-14. Speak only to those who need to know.
- Read Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 5:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15. Speak to those who need biblical hope or restoration.
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.

**Wednesday**—Key Question: **When** should you speak?

- Read Proverbs 18:13 and 29:20. Speak after gathering the facts:
  - Read Proverbs 18:17. Listen to all sides; don’t jump to conclusions.
  - Read Proverbs 13:10; 18:15; 2 Timothy 2:23. Listen for facts, not mere opinions.
  - Read Proverbs 20:5. Ask questions that yield insight, not just a “yes” or “no” answer.
- Read Proverbs 13:3; 15:28; 18:13; 21:23; James 1:19. Speak after thinking.
- Read Proverbs 15:23; 25:11. Speak at the appropriate time.
  - Read Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:5-6. Make the most of every opportunity to graciously build others up.
  - Read Proverbs 20:22; Romans 12:14; 1 Peter 3:8-9. Speak a blessing even when insulted or persecuted.
  - Read Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1; Colossians 1:28; 2 Timothy 2:24-25. Speak restoringly when others need warning or correcting.
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.

**Thursday**—Key Question: **How** should you speak?

- Read Ephesians 4:15. Speak in love.
  - Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-5. Let these traits of God’s love show you what loving speech looks like.
  - Read Proverbs 10:12 & 1 Peter 4:8. Love others who have transgressed against you.
- Read Proverbs 15:1; 16:32; 17:27; & Ephesians 4:25-27. Control your emotions as you speak.
- Read Proverbs 17:14; 20:3 & 2 Timothy 2:24-25. Speak without quarrelling.
- Read Proverbs 15:1; 16:21 & 24; 25:15; Colossians 4:6 & 1 Peter 3:15. Speak sweetly, gently, graciously and reverently.
- Read Psalm 19:14 & 1 Thessalonians 2:4. Speak “in the sight of God”, evaluated by him.
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.

**Friday**—Key Question: What should you **not** say?

- Read Exodus 20:16; 23:1; Deuteronomy 5:20; Psalm 31:18; Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9. You must not lie.
- Read Ephesians 4:29 & 31; Colossians 3:8. You must not use unwholesome, slanderous, malicious or abusive speech.
- Read Proverbs 26:18-19 & Ephesians 5:4. You must not speak with silly, coarse jokes.
- Read 1 Timothy 6:20 & 2 Timothy 2:16. You must avoid worldly, empty chatter, for it leads to further ungodliness.
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.

**Saturday**—Key Question: What **should** I say?

- Read Ephesians 4:15 & 25. Always tell the truth.
- Read Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 4:29 & Colossians 4:6. Speak only words which build others up.
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:20. Speak so as to reconcile others to God.
- Read 1 Peter 3:15. Speak so as to give witness for the Lord.
- Read Psalm 9:1; Ephesians 5:4 & 20; Colossians 3:17; Psalm 145:1-7 & 150:1-6. Verbally give thanks and praise to God.
- Read Psalm 20:7 & 44:8; Jeremiah 9:23-24; & 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Boast of God’s righteousness, mercy, justice and grace.
- Write a prayer to God based upon what you discovered about yourself from today’s readings.