

Disarming Gossip & Slander

HOW NOT TO BE

"DEFILED"

THROUGH AN

EVIL REPORT



"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly"
... Proverbs 26:22

1. What is an evil report?
2. How to detect an evil report?
3. How we become defiled through evil reports.

HOW NOT TO BE DEFILED THROUGH AN EVIL REPORT

TEXT: "A whisperer separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16:28)
"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue" (Proverbs 17:4)
"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Proverbs 17:9)

- I. What Is The Purpose Of This Message? To help you to be wise, discerning and a restorer in the lives of people and relationships.
- II. Why Is This Truth So Important? Because wrong responses to any evil reports will cause conflicts in families, friendships, churches and personal relationships. (Proverbs 16:28)
- III. _____
1. It is a distortion of facts, incomplete facts or false information.
 2. It is using words, tonal patterns or facial expressions to put someone else in a bad light.
 3. It is damaging someone else's reputation with information that doesn't need to be shared.
 4. It is encouraging or spreading discontent or discord among others.
 5. It is given with wrong motivations and causes the hearer to come to inaccurate conclusions and to respond with unscriptural "solutions".
- *Even if I am responsible to give negative information, it will be a bad report if I fail to first go to the offender privately according to Scripture with the motive of restoring them!!!

IV. How Does God Describe The Giver Of An Evil Report? (4 ways)

1. _____ (Proverbs 16:28; Romans 1:29)
One who secretly or privately passes on evil reports to others.
2. _____ (Proverbs 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; 26:22)
One who magnifies rumors and partial information, sharing detrimental information with those who are not part of the problem or part of the solution. (also called talebearer)
3. _____ (Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 10:18; Numbers 14:36)
One who tells the truth with a design to hurt; seeking to destroy another's credibility or reputation with a distortion of facts or evil suspicions.
4. _____ (I Timothy 5:13; I Peter 4:15)
One who digs up evil reports and makes it his business to spread them by means of gossip, slander or whispering. This sin is equal to murder and stealing, as God warns "let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters". (I Peter 4:15)

5 STAGES OF DEFILEMENT

In the medical world, there are stages of development of a disease that defiles. In the same way, there are stages of destruction to a spiritually healthy person:

1. _____ of "preventive" measures to avoid contamination.
2. _____ to one who is already "infected".
3. _____ (defilement) by allowing the "germs" to enter our system.
4. _____ as the germs overcome our defenses.
5. _____ when the infection destroys vital life-supporting functions.

#1. ~~Is not being aware of the destructive power of untrue or distorted words.~~ (II Corinthians 2:11)

- A. Ignorance of how words destroy close friendships:
"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (Proverbs 17:9)
- B. Ignorance of how the unclean defiles the clean, rather than the clean influencing the unclean. (Haggai 2:11-14)
- C. Ignorance of what constitutes an evil report:
It is an unauthorized, distorted, or false report which influences us to form an evil opinion about another person.
- D. Ignorance of how evil reports are given: They are communicated by words, facial expressions, gestures, and tonal patterns. They can be subtle or obvious, quiet or angry, sweet or bitter.
- E. Ignorance of how Satan uses evil reports:
 - *To produce conflict or ungodliness
 - *To discredit spiritual leadership
 - *To cause Christians to close their spirit toward each other
 - *To give non-Christians opportunity to mock Christianity and reject Christ.
- F. Ignorance of what motivates evil reports (James 3:14-18)
 - 1. Bitterness: Reacting because of personal hurts
 - 2. Rebellion: Justifying an independent spirit
 - 3. Deception: Believing that evil reports are right to give.
 - 4. Pride: Wanting to exalt self.
 - 5. Guilt: Wanting to justify past actions or attitudes.
 - 6. Envy: Desiring what another has.

#2. ~~Is entering into conversation with a person who is a carrier of an evil report.~~
"A prudent man or woman foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished." (Proverbs 27:12)

HOW DOES GOD WANT US TO RESPOND?

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." (Ephesians 5:10-12)

"Mark them and avoid them which cause divisions and offenses." (Romans 16:17)

*God has given us physical defenses to warn us about physical contamination. We can smell it, see it or taste it. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of contamination until it is too late.

*God has given us protective spiritual defenses as well to warn us about spiritual contamination.

- ...The promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- ...Warnings from God's Word.
- ...Wise counsel from the spiritually mature.
- ...Leadership from those in authority.

HOW TO DETECT A CARRIER OF AN EVIL REPORT?

1. A carrier will usually _____ before giving you the evil report. Any evidence of a compatible spirit in you will encourage them to give you the report.
2. A carrier will usually _____ of their report before giving it to you. They may do this by asking for your opinion about the person or by dropping a negative comment and observing your response.
3. A carrier will often _____ for the evil report by creating curiosity for it. Some starters are: "Have you heard about (the person)?" (or) "Wait until I tell you about (the person)!"
4. A carrier may use evil reports to _____ them because of being on the inside and having access to privileged information.
5. A carrier is usually one who _____ of evil and will even search them out. God condemns such "detectives of darkness" whose tongues are like sharp swords.

HOW TO DETECT AN EVIL REPORT?

(5 questions to ask before listening to a carrier)

1. " _____ ?"
Truth - Widening the circle of gossip only compounds the problem.
2. " _____ ?"
Truth - Refusal to identify the source of information is a sure signal of an evil report.
3. " _____ ?"
Truth - Spirituality is not measured by how well we expose an offender, but by how effectively we restore an offender. (Galatians 6:1)
4. " _____ ?"
Truth - Even "facts" become distorted when not balanced with other facts or when given with negative motives.
5. " _____ ?"
Truth - Those who give evil reports often claim that they are "misquoted". This is because their words and overriding impressions are reported.

- #3. _____ Is receiving an evil report from another person and believing that it is true.

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." (Proverbs 26:22)

In the same way that touching a diseased person will defile one's hands, listening to an evil report will defile one's mind. It is a reality that must be dealt with, "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15)

*A classic illustration of being defiled by an evil report is Absalom giving an evil report about David, thus infecting many and causing an entire nation to be taken over. (II Samuel 15:1-6)

- #4. _____ Which is responding to an evil report with human reasoning and emotion, rather than with spiritual understanding and genuine love.
- "The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Proverbs 14:15)
- "As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife." (Proverbs 26:21)

CAUTION - WARNING - RED LIGHT:

If the defilement of an evil report is not cleansed, wrong attitudes, opinions, conclusions and actions will follow - even toward very close friends. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." (Proverbs 16:28)

SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

1. Believing the evil report is true.
 2. Forming negative opinions based on the report.
 3. Focusing on negative aspects of the person involved.
 4. Backing away from the person in your spirit.
 5. Telling the evil report to others.
- #5. _____ Is being mentally and emotionally controlled by the evil report and by the destructive spirit of the one who gave it.
- "A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart." (Proverbs 26:24,25)
- "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." (Leviticus 19:16)

SYMPTOMS OF A DISEASED CHRISTIAN

1. Developing bitterness/or rebellion, even though the person involved did not directly offend us.
 2. Setting ourselves up as the judge in matters which are God's responsibility, and recruiting others to "our side".
 3. Searching out evil reports and then using them to give the worse possible impression. "An ungodly person diggeth up evil and in their lips there is a burning fire." (Proverbs 16:27)
- *A diseased Christian will grieve and quench the Holy Spirit by taking up the offenses of others and making them their own (and adding to them).

HOW TO CLEANSE MY MIND FROM AN EVIL REPORT

1. ASK GOD (in prayer) TO CLEANSE YOUR MIND.
2. ASK GOD (in prayer) TO GIVE YOU GENUINE LOVE FOR THOSE INVOLVED.
3. PROTECT YOUR MIND WITH THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES:

Have I accepted the evil report as true?

"The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going." (Proverbs 14:15)

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins." (Psalm 19:13) Presumptuousness is taking a matter for granted and assuming it to be true in the absence of proof to the contrary.

Has the evil report affected how I feel toward the person involved?

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit." (Proverbs 15:4)

"For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things." (Romans 2:1)

Do I have an urge to tell someone else the evil report?

"A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." (Proverbs 11:13)

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

"Let no corrupt communications proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." (Eph. 4:29)

I KNOW MY HEART IS CLEAN...

1. When I lose my urge to tell someone else the evil report.
2. When I grieve over the fact that a report was given.
3. When I have genuine love toward the person involved in the report.
4. When I am willing to examine my own life for failures.
5. When I am willing to ask the five questions to the one who gave me the evil report.
6. When I am willing to go to the person evil was spoken of to check out the facts and help restore in the spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:1; Matthew 18:15-18)
7. When I am willing to contact those spiritually responsible in authority, and leave any further action with them.

"O, GOD...

HELP ME TO NEVER SPEAK AN EVIL REPORT (James 3:2), HELP ME TO NEVER LISTEN TO AN EVIL REPORT." (Proverbs 17:4)

CONCLUSION

(Truth To Help You If Someone Ever Brings You A Bad Report)

1. We are not to be overcome by evil but we are to take the offensive and overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)
2. We must never be afraid to ask, "Are you telling me this so I can go with you to help restore this person?" (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15-18)
3. We must remember to respond with grief and godly sorrow to stop an evil report. "As the north wind drives away rain, so a grieved countenance drives away a backbiting tongue." (Prov. 25:23)
4. We must remember that, "He that answers a matter before all the facts are in (and only God knows them all) it will be folly and shame unto him." (Prov. 18:13)
5. We must remember that, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

JESUS' ADVICE ON HOW TO RESTORE

TEXT: Matthew 7:1-5

- (v.1) "Judge not that ye be not judged."
- (v.2) "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
- (v.3) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"
- (v.4) "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"
- (v.5) "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

DEFINITIONS

A. _____ Four Greek verbs give us the meaning in Scripture (Dokimazo, Anakrino, Diakrino, Perirazo)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. _____ TO TEST | 6. _____ TO TRY |
| 2. _____ TO EXAMINE | 7. _____ TO INVESTIGATE |
| 3. _____ TO INTERPRET | 8. _____ TO SEARCH OUT |
| 4. _____ TO PROVE | 9. _____ TO DEMONSTRATE |
| 5. _____ TO EVALUATE | 10. _____ TO WEIGH THOROUGHLY |

B. _____ Comes from the Greek verb (Krino) which means:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. _____ TO DECIDE | 4. _____ TO PASS JUDGMENT |
| 2. _____ TO DETERMINE | 5. _____ TO SENTENCE |
| 3. _____ TO CONCLUDE | 6. _____ TO CONDEMN |

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?

JUDGING (determining a sentence and condemning) is sin (Matthew 7:1) for only God knows all the facts and can pass sentence.

DISCERNMENT (the ability to see behind a person's spiritual condition) is a gift to be exercised (I Cor. 12:10)

7 BASIC INDICATORS THAT EXPOSE A JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT

- 1. If his failure improves the opinion I have of myself, I am judging.
- 2. If his failure decreases my concern for the faults I know I have, I am judging.
- 3. If his failure gives me a desire to see that he is punished (and not restored) I am judging.
- 4. If I am eager to tell others about his failure, I am judging.
- 5. If I enjoy it and have a sense of pleasure when hearing of others faults, I am judging.
- 6. If his failure prompts me to review his past failures, I am judging.
- 7. If his failure causes me to feel that I cannot forgive him, I am judging.

HOW CAN I TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

By our desire and ability to give steps of correction and restoring.

- *If I want to expose and exploit someone - I am judging.
- *If I want to restore and help someone - I am discerning.
- *The motive behind the action is the key.

- *Judging Hurts, Destroys and Exploits!
- *Discerning Helps, Corrects and Restores!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERY CHRISTIAN FOLLOWS MATTHEW 18:15-17?

- #1. When every Christian is committed to giving only a good report, all gossip, whispering and slander will cease. If someone wanted to give a bad report, those around him would ask, "Have you gone to him first? Are you telling us so we can go to him with you?" A mature Christian will not hear a bad report unless they are a part of the problem or a part of the solution. Practicing Matthew 18 stops anyone who would be devicive and bring discord.
- #2. Matthew 18 has a built in basis for giving and receiving loving correction within the body of Christ. We are to exhort one another daily, "Lest any of (us) be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Hebrews 3:13)
- #3. The entire purpose of Galatians 6 and Matthew 18 is to restore (not judge, expose or exploit the sinner). Those fallen and offended and the offender as well, need our help.
- #4. "A good report nourishes the bones." (Proverbs 15:30) The health of our whole body is in the blood, and the blood is manufactured in the morrow of the bones. Therefore, the healthier our bones are, the healthier our bodies are.
- #5. When each member of the body of Christ knows that every other member is going to give only a good report about him unless he comes to him first, he experiences a deep sense of loyalty and security. On the other hand, when a bad report is given about another Christian before going to him first, it destroys fellowship and builds insecurity and suspicion with the body. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." (Proverbs 16:28)
- #6. The mark of a true Christian to the outside world is the quality of his love for other Christians. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (Jn 13:35)
When the world sees Christians loving each other enough to follow God's steps of correction as outlined in Matthew 18, they will believe that God did send Jesus into the world. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I am in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (Jn 17:21)

Judging another is sin. (Matthew 7:1) Discerning their spiritual condition is a gift. (I Corinthians 12:10) The difference between the two is our desire and ability to give steps of correction.

The mark of spirituality is not whether we are able to expose a brother but whether we are able to restore him. (Galatians 6:1)