

What is gossip? Bearing bad news behind someone's back out of a bad heart.¹

Are there Scriptures that speak about gossip? Yes! There are a number of passages that speak to this sin. Here is a sampling...

1. Proverbs 11:13: *A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.*
2. Proverbs 18:8: *The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.*
3. Proverbs 16:28: *A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.*
Proverbs 20:19: *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.*
4. 2 Corinthians 12:20: *For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be...I fear that there may be...gossip.*

So what exactly is bearing bad news? There are three types of bad news.² They are as follows...

1. **Bad information:** This is the most obvious form of gossip. You might even call this form of speech telling lies. Spreading ideas around that are not true. Telling your friend that so-and-so got arrested, cheated on their taxes, and robbed a bank when none of those things actually happened. Bad information has to do with things that are not true.
2. **Bad news that is true:** Gossip is not just telling a story that's not true; it might also be telling a story that is true. This is what some people have called a "shameful truth." So for example, let's say you are told something by a friend about another friend. And this thing did in fact in happen: They cheated on an exam, lied to a family member, or broke a promise to a fellow church member. Bad news that is true doesn't have to be subject of our conversations.
3. **Bad news that might be true:** All of us at some level like to make predictions. In our own little way we are all closet fortune tellers. A third form of gossip might be attempting to predict a negative outcome in someone else's life. It's not our place to project a negative outcome on other people. Nor is it our place to share that projected outcome with our buddy.

¹ From Matthew Mitchell's *Resisting Gossip*.

² Ibid.