

“Not Malicious Gossips”

by Jan Patterson

Memory Verse:

*“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.”*

~ Ps. 141:3

Introduction

- 1) The only negative command in our passage of Titus 2:3-5
- 2) The Scripture doesn't lie and it says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. . .,”* Jeremiah 17:9, KJV.

I. What It Is

- A. Plural of the Greek work used three times, all in Timothy and Titus. The word is “diabolos” and is translated every other time in the NT as *“the devil!”* (as in Matt. 4)

***“Older women . . . are not
to be [like] the devil.”
~ Titus 2:3***

B. Various meanings and synonyms:

- 1) Slander – false information about a person.
- 2) Gossip – “talk of a personal, sensational or intimate nature.”
- 3) To accuse – “charge with a shortcoming or error.”
- 4) Synonyms include “defame, vilify, blacken, libel.”
- 5) For our purposes – “to injure the reputation of another.”
- 6) “Setters at variant, or those who promote quarrels that they may gain from them.”
- 7) Those who “spread evil reports and invent them.”

C. Something in our fallen nature wants to hear or speak of things of a “personal, sensational or intimate nature.”



II. How Prone We Are

A. The Scripture's only actual command against this is to women, and Christian women at that, and actually to Christian women leaders, in both passages (Tit. 2:3 and I Tim. 3:11).

B. Quotes from various commentators

- 1) Albert Barnes: “. . . mingling as they would with the church, and having an **opportunity** to claim acquaintance with many, it would be in their power, if they chose, to do great injury to the character of others,” (p. 149).
- 2) Source unknown: “For **in their gossip** many women like to tell others anything bad they have found out, and . . . **they get widely around.**”
- 3) Homer Kent: “The danger of unguarded speech by elderly women with **time on their hands** is obvious” (p.228).
- 4) Thomas Taylor: “The precept is especially directed to women, because of the **inclination** of their sex hereunto” (p.260).
- 5) Thomas Taylor: Our “age not only gives greater access to **opportunity**, but also the ‘right’ to speak, more than younger women” (p.260).

“Talkativeness is a disease of women,
and it is increased by old age.”

~ John Calvin

C. Some things to think about as we examine our hearts:

- 1) Intimation or putting a “favorable construction” on our words
- 2) Changing the truth, even a little, or adding to it
- 3) Telling secret infirmities

“ . . . Love covers . . . ,” I Pet. 4:8

“ . . . a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter,” Prov. 11:13

- 4) Assigning motives. **We do not know the hearts of others.**
- 5) Silence!
- 6) Partial silence
- 7) Repeating a matter – details often and easily get changed
- 8) Encouraging gossip in others

III. Its Effects

- A. Ruins the good name of another person.
- B. Blasphemes the Word of God (Titus 2:5).
- C. We are multiplying ourselves by our behavior and speech

D. Proverbs on a lying or slanderous tongue, a talebearer:

- 1) God hates it, 6:16-17 and 12:22.
- 2) Stirs up strife, 10:12 and 18
- 3) Reveals secrets instead of concealing them, 11:13
- 4) It *“breathes out”* lies (i.e., common), 14:5
- 5) Not becoming, or fitting, 17:7
- 6) Separates close friends, 16:28 and 17:9
- 7) Words are deep wounds, 18:8 and 26:22
- 8) Will not be unpunished, will not escape, 19:5
- 9) Hates its “victims,” 26:28

E. “The Devil’s gunpowder to blow up a whole world of wickedness.” (Taylor, p. 260; James 3:6, *“set on fire by hell.”*)

“By these means . . . the whole profession of religion, is at this day traduced and disgraced.”
~ Thomas Taylor

IV. How To Avoid It

- A. Awareness – notice the conversation of yourself and others.
- B. Repentance – name it, denounce it, turn from it, hate it.
- C. Prayer – Psalm 141:3 “*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.*”
- D. Inward principle and habit of Holiness.
 - 1) Matt. 15:19, “*For out of the heart come . . . slanders . . .*” and Matt. 12:34, “. . .*For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*”
 - 2) ---Is your heart proud, envious, jealous?
---Is your heart hateful, angry, or bitter?
---Is your heart discontent?
---Is your heart idle?
---Is your heart careless?

OR

- 3) ---Is your heart filled with what is true, with the Word, with spiritual songs, with the fruits of the Spirit?

***The world will, to a great extent,
judge the churches by the character
which the gospel produces in its women.
~ R. C. H. Lenski***

“Life and death are in the power of the tongue.”
May ours tend daily to LIFE.
(Prov. 18:21)



Sources Consulted:

The American Heritage College Dictionary

Exposition of Titus, Thomas Taylor

Notes on the New Testament, Albert Barnes

The Pastoral Epistles, Homer Kent

All Scripture references from NASB, unless otherwise indicated.