

# February 2005: Battling the Gossip Monster

by Aaron Greenway

The Gossip Monster is a terrible animal. Like a terror, it prowls about saying anything, whether it is true or not. The Gossip Monster hurts others and many times acts in such a way that you cannot recognize it when you see it. But then it leaves you with a bitter taste in your mouth. The Gossip Monster gets its energy from the lust of knowing information about everyone else, and the juicier the story, the better. The Gossip Monster does not understand the concept of love even if it somehow leads you to believe that it does. It is in direct conflict with God because God is not the author of fighting in the Body of Christ. The Gossip Monster is bent on driving a wedge between brothers and sister and destroying their lives while it keeps right on growing. Finally, after doing its damage, it waltzes away, leaving people wounded and crippled.

This perhaps is one of those sins that is not clearly seen. You cannot even notice many times when it comes up, or you would never listened to it. Gossiping is one the most destructive and hurtful sins in the Church. I have seen people rebuking brothers and sisters for sexual sins, but they say nothing about cliques and gossip. Gossip is just as much sin as stealing, just as much a sin as immorality. It can destroy someone's testimony. And unfortunately, a gossipper usually never sees their problem and therefore they do not change. It hides itself behind a spiritual facade so it can easily be justified. Sexual sin cannot easily hide itself, but gossip can! But God sees all things!

Many times, to pass around gossip, we hide it by asking our brother or sister to pray for Brother So-n-So. I have heard others say, "Please pray for that couple in the church because they are going through marital problems." Or "You know, I would never marry a Gringo like my Mexican friend

**The Enemy uses rumors to divide us.** He uses the ugly words of others to turn others against us. Those who are given to gossip do not understand what "unity" is. They do not understand what love is. When you are spreading something about someone that may not be true, or only partially true, you are not loving the person. You are not helping the person. You are only hurting the person. You may even destroy the person's reputation to the point where they will never recover from it. **Let us not be part of that.**

who married an American." Or maybe we ask for information, "What's going on with this? What's going on with that?" "Well, it's his/her fault that they broke up."

Recently, two of our singles in the church were dating. I just happened to ask the girl, "How is Joe? How are you?" (Joe is not his real name). I asked this because I had not seen them for a while. She told me that things were not good between them, but I didn't ask anything else, except to say that I was sorry. And to this day I don't know what happened and really it was none of my business. Then, later, I saw them together again. I told her that I was happy that they were together again. I am sure at some point in the past I had messed up, but thankfully, I did the right thing in this particular situation...at least, I hope I did. Sometimes, we don't realize what we are doing when the Gossip Monster attacks until those hurtful things have been said about us. Sometimes, we have to learn the hard way. That is the "school of hard knocks." Or we could say, "What goes around comes around."

On another occasion, I had someone in our growth group who went around talking about me, as the leader. Instead of coming to me with her concerns, she decided to talk to others about it. As a result, the group as a whole lost confidence in me to lead, and we stagnated. In another church, a rumor about a pastor went around, suggesting that he was flirting with someone that was not his wife. It ended up not being true. But the pastor was forced out anyway. Half the church left with him. And so now, there is no one in the church who is involved in the discipleship. They all left. My fiancée's father, a brand new believer, needs to be discipled. But he won't get any help at that church. They are too wounded. Be careful what you say about others.

What does the Bible say about gossip and rumors?

Proverbs 20:19 - He who goes about gossiping reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who speaks foolishly.

2 Corinthians 12:20 - For I fear that perhaps I may come and find you not what I wish, and that you may find me not what you wish; that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.

1 Timothy 5:13 - Besides that, they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

Proverbs 26:28 - A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Exodus 23:1 - You shall not utter a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man, to be a malicious witness.

James 1:26 - If any one thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain.

When the gossip is flying through the church, there are ways that we can cut it off and counteract it by doing two or three things: 1) We can not let it go on to the next person by not participating in it, 2) We can ask the person who told us the gossip to reevaluate his/her priorities, 3) If we have a question or a doubt about what was said and it really does concern us, then we can go to the person in question and ask them directly. If the person tells us, then fine. But, if not, then we should let it go and not meddle in it.

Christ gave us a formula in the event someone has fallen into sin. That is when it becomes our business to restore the brother. But if this is not the case, then why do we go around gossiping about people other than just to make ourselves feel good, and at the same time, destroy the reputation of that person. Finally, if a person keeps gossiping, leave him/her alone. Always be careful with the person who knows everything about everybody! Have nothing to do with them lest you pick up their habits, or at the very least you are the target of their poison.

Let us fill our time with something more than just destroying other people's testimonies and reputations. The Enemy uses rumors to divide us. He uses the ugly words of others to turn others against us. Those who are given to gossip do not understand what "unity" is. They do not understand what love is. When you are spreading something about someone that may not be true, or only partially true, you are not loving the person. You are not helping the person. You are only hurting the person. You may even

destroy the person's reputation to the point where they will never recover from it. Let us not be part of that. Make sure that anything you say is within in Biblical parameters.

Something to ponder...

Your brother,  
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