

## Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

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### Gossip

"Gossip is the devil's radio." – Anonymous

"If anyone speaks evil of you, so live that none will believe it." – Anonymous

"Whoever gossips to you will gossip of you." – Spanish Proverb

"Never tell evil of a man if you do not know it for a certainty; and if you do know it for a certainty, then ask yourself: "Why should I tell it?" – Johann Kaspar Lavater

In 1976, J.J. Turner published an excellent commentary on James, destined to be a classic. In discussing James 3 and the perils of the tongue, relating to gossip, he wrote, "The most frequent venom expelled from the tongue is gossip or slander. Millions are slain by it daily. Gossip has been called "the favorite pastime" of our age. Some are even paid to engage in it, while the rest enjoy reading it. Gossip can "kill" a person hundreds of miles away. The accounts of destroyed reputations and influences are endless. It is not possible to know how many good men and women have been destroyed by this deadly evil. One has rightly observed that the tongue never kills just one, but three at once: the person slandered, the person to whom it is told, and the one doing the telling (cf. 1 Pet. 2:22)." (J.J. Turner, *The Epistle Of James*, pp. 101-102)

In Scripture gossip is referred to as talebearing, i.e. a slanderer. There is an interesting use of this term in Proverbs. "The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body" (Prov 18:8). The KJV actually is closer to the original meaning of the original language and speaks of the wounds that are inflicted by the talebearer. In one sense they are tasty trifles to those who enjoy hearing the gossip, but for those on the receiving end, those words of gossip can be quite painful.

Brother Turner shares a poem in his work that is the proverbial icing on the cake, entitled, "Before You Gossip," written by Edith Dahlby.

"If you have heard a bit of gossip,  
I tell you what to do; that before you tell another,  
Just suppose it had been you.  
Just supposed the latest scandal had been on your love, or you;  
And only half the details, really had been partly true.  
Circumstances strange and new, all conspiring to mix up...  
Just suppose, my friend, 'was you.  
Would you wish folks to repeat it? O forgive...forget it, too"  
So before you tell another, just suppose it had been you."