

Gossip

By Clarence Johnson

King Solomon, the sage of Israel, wrote, "A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body" (**Proverbs 18:6-8**). And again, "A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends" (**Proverbs 16:28**).

This truth has been recognized by many before and after Solomon. Friendships and family ties have been sacrificed at the altar of gossip. Even whole nations have been brought low by slander.

Each of us, at one time or another, has been the object of another's gossip. We know all too well the power of the tongue to hurt and destroy. Perhaps the gossipers need to be reminded that "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (**Gal. 6:7**). Perhaps that is why the wise man said, "whoever speaks slander is a fool" (**Prov. 10:18**). Jesus Himself admonished, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also

to them...." (**Matthew 7:12**).

A good rule to follow when tempted to repeat a juicy morsel of gossip might be to ask one's self a few pertinent questions: (1) do I know this to be a fact, (2) would I be willing to put it in writing and sign my name to it, and (3) will those to whom I tell it be made better by this knowledge? If we cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, let us refrain from the temptation to "tell all." If someone approaches you with a bit of slander, ask him to submit to this same three question test. If he "flunks out" consider the source of that which you have heard, and pour cold water on the fire of contention.

"Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body" (**Proverbs 26:20-22**).



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the building	Thursday 10 AM Ladies 'Proverbs' class at the Rouse's
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Sick

Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Joan Parker (Aurie Adams Grandmother)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Meredith NeSmith (Jessica Anderson's Cousin)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Peggy Theis (Timothy Jones' grandmother)	Toni and William Herd	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)

May Birthdays

- 2 - Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3 - Paula Davis
- 4 - Cadence Pittman
- 10 - Ian Norman
- 11 - Caleb George
- 11 - Scott Perkins
- 12 - Daphene Whatley
- 13 - Jana Hall
- 13 - Anna Grace Long
- 15 - Bryce Daniels
- 16 - Shawna Harris
- 19 - Madison Seals
- 22 - Sarah Holliday
- 24 - Andy Roberts
- 25 - Chuck Hahn
- 26 - Fallon Hartsell
- 28 - Candy Long
- 31 - Rachel Tolliver

News and Notes

- ☒ - Let us remember our upcoming VBS (June 24-27).
- ☒ - Brother Rouse is preaching in New Jersey this weekend.
- ☒ - There will be a workday on Sat. May 18th from 8-12.
- ☒ - Kalee Reid lost her grandfather, Lamar Reed, last week.
- ☒ - Ryan Hasty has been invited to come and work as a 2nd preacher here! He will come in August.
- ☒ - Our Singing night is tonight.
- ☒ - The flower fund is running low. Please see Mary Ann Roberts to contribute.

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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A Sin Leading to Death

By Jeffery W. Hamilton



Thoughts to Ponder

Joy is that deep settled confidence that God is in control in every area of my life.

1 John 5:16-17: If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.

In this passage, John divides all sins into two categories: sins that lead to death and sins that do not lead to death. John tells us we should pray for those whose sins that do not lead to death. However, for those whose sins lead to death, we are not to pray on their behalf. If we are to understand who we are and are not to pray for, we need to be able to distinguish between the two groups of sins.

Let us start by determining what kind of death is John talking about. In the Scriptures there are two kinds of death: the physical and the spiritual. Sins that lead to physical death would be things like suicide, drug use, and drunk driving. If we assume that John is talking about sins that lead to physical death, we find ourselves having difficulty explaining the actions of some men in the Bible. For example, both Jesus and Stephen prayed to God to forgive those who were kill-

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ing them because the people did not understand what they were doing (**Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60**). If John was talking about physical death, then Jesus and Stephen would have been praying for people who were committing sins leading to death. This does not ring true.

However, in **Romans 6:20-23** Paul tells us that the wages of sin is death. The death is contrasted to gift of God, which is eternal life. From this we conclude that Paul is talking about spiritual death. It seems that John too is speaking of spiritual death. However, at first glance, it would seem from Paul's statement that all sins lead to death. The answer is yes and no. Not every sin committed ultimately leads to death.

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM
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Evangelist and Editor

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When we sin and then repent (turn away from those sins), we will no longer be heading towards death (**Galatians 6:1**). Similarly, when we see ourselves in sin and are willing to acknowledge our wrong-doing before God, then we will no longer be heading towards death (**1 John 1:8-2:2**). If we recognize our faults and pray to God for forgiveness, He will remove our sin (**James 5:15-16; Hebrews 8:10-12**).

Well, if we can be forgiven of our sins, then what possible sin is there that leads to death? Actually, the Bible is filled with many examples. A person who willfully sins - in other words, a person who consciously chooses to sin and does not care about the consequences - is impossible to bring back to God (**Hebrews 10:26-31**). Such an attitude is called blasphemy (**Numbers 15:30-31**). Notice that not only is the person cut off from God's people, but his guilt remains with him. Korah's rebellion against Moses is an example of this type of attitude (**Numbers 16:1-35**). Korah and his followers died because they chose to break God's Law and would not turn from it, even though they were warned.

Another passage in Hebrews also speaks to this point. When someone is taught God's Word and then turns their back on their only source of salvation, there is nothing left to bring them back to God (**Hebrews 6:4-6**). Peter, when discussing this same point, says leaving is worse than never finding the truth (**2 Peter 2:20-22**). The reason is simple, if you have never learned, there is a hope of teaching you about the truth, but if you have already learned the truth and have rejected it, what more can anyone do?

Remember the definition of blasphemy in **Numbers 15:30-31**? It is the willful rejection of God after a person has learned better. Jesus told his audience that they could reject him and his teachings, but if they blasphemed the Holy Spirit - rejected the Spirit's teaching - it would not be forgivable (**Luke 12:10; Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-30**). It was the work of the Holy Spirit to confirm the teaching of God's word (**Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4**). If a man rejects the proof offered, how can the Bible be proven? The Holy Spirit also delivered the word of God using the apostles as the vehicle to write down the words he delivered (**John 14:25-**

26; 16:12-14; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13). If a man rejects the work of the Holy Spirit - the Bible - and rejects the proof that His work is true - the miracles done - then what hope is there for that man to be saved?

It is not that God wants to punish a person. God desires that everyone would be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**). However, there comes a time to acknowledge that many people will reject God's gift of salvation and without that gift there is no hope.

While there is still hope, we are to intercede on the behalf of sinners before God. We should pray for the forgiveness of brethren who have sinned (**James 5:15**). It is something God has always required. Job had to pray for his friends before God would forgive them of their bad advice (**Job 42:7-9**). Abraham had to intercede for Abimelech (**Genesis 20:7**). Moses prevented the destruction of the nation of Israel by praying on their behalf (**Psalms 106:23**). Hezekiah prayed for those who did not worship God properly (**2 Chronicles 30:18-20**). Amos interceded on Israel's behalf (**Amos 7:1-3**). Later, God desired for someone to intercede on Israel's behalf, but no one could be found (**Ezekiel 22:29-30**). Sin was so wide spread, there was no one left who desired to serve God in this manner.

However, sometimes a person's sins are so firmly entrenched that God will not listen to prayers on behalf of that person. In the last days of Judah, God told Jeremiah repeatedly not to pray for the nation because He would not listen to their pleas (**Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14**). There was only one option left for the nation and that was death (**Jeremiah 15:1-2**). All the prayers of intercession would not change the sentence God had made.

What made the Israelites different from the people in earlier times? These people remained stubbornly in their sins, despite the repeated warnings from God. They refused to turn back to God, even in their distress. They had given up on God and so there was no hope for them.

Because you are reading this, searching for answers to better serve God, I know there is still hope for you. God's offer of salvation remains open for all who will accept it. However, you cannot delay forever. We would love to have you join us, not as you are, but as a full brother in Christ. Will you not consider God's offer this day?



A Christian Prays! Do You?

By Robert Turner

A Christian prays--- and prays--- and prays. But many church members scarcely know the meaning of the word once they leave the church building and the stilted "audience conscious" phrases that pass for prayer there. "Pray without ceasing;" (**1 Thes.5:17**) makes no apparent impression.

It is a tragedy that God is considered so inaccessible. To many He is far away, locked in an inner office; with an alert guard of clergymen, forms and format to protect Him from the "ordinary" caller. The idea is wholly foreign to the truth.

"Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (**Matt. 6:6**) Thus Jesus describes the close intimate relation that exists between the petitioner and his Creator. This does not negate public prayer (the contrast is with hypocritical show-offs); in fact this touches the vitals of all acceptable prayer. When intimate communion with God is missing, public prayer becomes a farce.

Prayer is a Christian's privilege; made real and earnest-- meaningful-- because a Christian (and only a Christian) truly appreciates such characteristics of God as the following.

GOD IS NEAR! He is "not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being." (**Acts 17:27-28**) A Christian lives close to God. His Maker is ever-present, all-about ; ready to be contacted upon a moment's notice. This nearness comforts the Christian -- "in the valley of the shadow.. thou art with me."

A Christian believes that God is near, that God cares, that God hears, and that God gives. He is conscious of his dependence upon God, and leans upon Him without hesitation.

GOD CARES! The Christian casts all his cares upon God, "for He careth for you." (**1 Pet. 5:7**) Our Father is concerned-- His interest is genuine. He who takes note of the sparrow's fall, watched over all His children.

GOD HEARS! His eyes "are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers." (**1 Pet. 3:12**) "All

things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (**Heb. 4:13b**) And hearing, He understands our frailties-- "the feeling of our infirmities." (**Heb. 4:15-16**) so we may come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy.

AND GOD GIVES! "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (**Matt. 7:7-f**) ASK! SEEK! KNOCK! These are imperatives, in the Greek present tense. They say, "Ask" and keep on asking; "seek" and continue to seek; "knock" again and again. The thought is akin to Matt. 6:33-- "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

A Christian believes that God is near, that God cares, that God hears, and that God gives. He is conscious of his dependence upon God, and leans upon Him without hesitation. So he prays; when he awakes-- as he goes to work-- when he partakes of God's rich blessings-- when he feels the weight of sorrow and cares-- as he lays him down to sleep. A Christian prays; and what about you??

