



TALK IT OVER

LEADER NOTES & SCRIPTURES

Leader Tips: Continue using **name tags** (even if only one person is new).

There isn't time to cover every question – **choose what's best for your group.** Not everyone has to answer every question. Allow some time to share. Move on to the next question.

Before the group scatters, eats, etc., mention the **mission/outreach idea** discussed in this week's email from Pastor Dwayne. See the "Start Serving" section on Page 2.

A scoundrel plots evil, and on their lips it is like a scorching fire. A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends.

Proverbs 16:27-28 (NIV)

When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret. Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation.

Proverbs 25:9-10 (NLT)

There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him... a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Proverbs 6:16, 19 (NIV)

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NIV)

The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.

Proverbs 18:8 (NIV)

Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense, but the one who has understanding holds their tongue. A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret

Proverbs 11:12-13

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:29 NIV

Rick Warren has defined gossip as any time that we're talking about a situation with someone who's neither part of the problem nor part of the solution. Let's invite the Holy Spirit to help us recognize gossip in ourselves and others, and determine to let him change our hearts. Our big fat mouths will be more apt to spread encouragement than gossip.

Start talking. Choose a good conversation starter for your group.

- How do you recognize gossip (what are its tell-tale signs)?
- Briefly share about a time you when caught yourself gossiping (or when someone else caught you doing it). How did it feel?

Start thinking. Questions to get your group thinking.

- Why do you think *you* (forget the hypothetical "other people") gossip? What are you looking to get out of it?
- What are some of the ways gossip harms relationships (see Proverbs 16:27-28)?

How might gossiping harm you? (See Proverbs 25:9-10.)

- Pastor Dwayne said that it might have been better for someone to be an alcoholic rather than to be a gossip, because the damage a gossip does is much more widespread. Do you agree with this extreme statement? Why or why not?

Start growing. These questions will challenge us to stretch our thinking.

- Read Proverbs 6:16,19 and 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 aloud. Why does God detest gossip so deeply?

Why do people (like us) enjoy it so much? Read Proverbs 18:8 aloud for some help.

- Below are three questions from Sunday that we can ask ourselves to stop us from gossiping. (Recap these from Sunday's bulletin notes.) Which question speaks most loudly to you?
 1. *Is my conversation helpful or hurtful?*
 2. *Am I making private matters public?*
 3. *Am I permitting others to gossip?*

- **OR** - (You could discuss the following as an alternative approach):

Discuss the following statements from Sunday:

"Everything you say must be true, but everything that is true does not need to be said."

"What you permit, you promote."

- Do you have any tricks for shutting down gossip when it comes your way? What works for you?



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But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.
Matthew 12:36-37 (NIV)

Leader Tip: Remind the group of **confidentiality** – what’s said in the room STAYS in the room!

Invite people to pray and even repent during this time for their gossiping. Model for your group a brief prayer of encouragement for someone after they share, assuring them of the Lord’s forgiveness.

After everyone who desires to pray has done so, conclude the prayer time as God directs.

Here’s a suggested prayer:
God, thank You for the gossip-destroying power of the Gospel. Thank You for Jesus. Thank You that in our weakness, You are made strong. Forgive us for the ways we’ve tried to put down others to build up ourselves. Give us the strength to lift each other up. Amen!

Start responding & praying*. Be bold and pray with power.

- Read Matthew 12:36-37 aloud. If you believe these words of Jesus in scripture, what emotions or response to they elicit from you?
- (*As you ask the question below, invite people to share as little or as much as desired, but to do so in the form of a prayer of repentance to God for doing what He detests – gossiping.*)

What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you right now, perhaps about:

- How you’ve disguised gossip as “sharing” or as prayer requests, or as feigned concern for someone?
- How you’ve willingly permitted (listened to) gossip?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Fill in the blank, and set a reminder on your phone or somewhere you’ll remember. I’m going to get caught encouraging _____ this week.
- Is there anyone you’ve hurt with gossip? How will you make it right?
- Commit to memory the three questions that can help us stop gossiping and use them this week as needed.
- For fun, invite the group to practice shutting down gossip as it comes them (Example: do so in a loving way, a direct way, or even with a little attitude).

Start serving. Discuss a missional activity the group can do together.

Say something like: “Let’s talk about some ways we can be generous as a group to someone else by discussing what kind of mission we could undertake together to help people outside of our group!”

- Elicit ideas from the group about some ways the group could work together to serve someone else, meet a family’s need, etc. Use the additional attached page to spark some ideas.
- Let the group know that the plan will be to carry out our mission during these first nine weeks that we’re together, if possible.