
APPLYING SPIRITUAL FORMATION

DEALING WITH EVIL COMMUNICATION, GOSSIPING AND IMMORAL JESTING

1 CORINTHIANS 15:33

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Someone may ask, what is evil communication? According to Wikipedia - The word *communication* has its root in the Latin verb *communicare*, which means 'to share' or 'to make common'.^[1] Communication is usually understood as the transmission of information. That is, the activity of communicating or conveying information. Let us check what evil communication means and the context in which Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church in his first epistle.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul wrote of the false teachers who had come into the church at Corinth teaching that the resurrection of Jesus Christ wasn't true. These people considered only their physical existence and denied life after death or the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:32). As a result, their moral outlook on life influenced the rest of the Corinthian

believers. The point Paul makes here is pertinent to all people in all ages. When we associate with or take delight in the company of people with worldly morals, we run the risk of mimicking their behaviors, their language, and their habits.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Co. 15:33).

1 Corinthians 15:33 is a command to separate from all evil communications. It describes a very strict way of Christian living. It is a warning that any association or company or companionship or communion with any form of evil spoils the right and biblical way of Christian living and thinking.

“Evil communications” refer to any kind of associations, relationships, communion, conversation, and

fellowship that is evil, bad, wrong, or harmful by the standard of God's Word. "**Communications**" is the Greek *homilia*, which refers to any form of association, companying together, companionship, conversation. It is from *homileo*, meaning "a multitude, a crowd, a company." It is translated "talked together" (**Lu. 24:14**) and "communed together" (**Lu. 24:15**).

1 Corinthians 15:33 applies to every area of life: friendships, marriage, education, entertainment, literature, social media, television, movies, YouTube videos, video games, music, etc. It applies to children, youth, parents, preachers, and grandparents. Evil communications will corrupt good manners of any person of any age. **1 Corinthians 15:33** is an extremely important warning in the internet era in which evil communications are only a mouse click or a screen tap away. The word *homilia* (communion, companionship, company) is an exact definition for social media!

1 Corinthians 15:33 warns that it is easy to be deceived in this matter. Paul says, "**Be not deceived.**" You are not an exception. If you associate with, commune with, company with, converse with evil, you will most definitely be injured by it. If your children associate with, commune with, company with, converse with evil, they will most definitely be injured by it. Multitudes have been deceived in this matter. Sometimes, family members such as wife, husband, mother, father, siblings,

etc. can prove to be bad companions through their bad habits and bad advice.

Examples of evil communications corrupt good manners

1. Pagan wives corrupt Solomon

Solomon married pagan wives and became a victim in that, the pagan women misled King Solomon to do evil in the sight of the Lord. In case you have forgotten, remember that King Solomon was God-fearing and God appeared to him twice. Solomon offered a thousand plus sacrifices to God in Gihon, requested wisdom at the hands of God, and built and dedicated God's temple in Jerusalem. Could there be anything that would turn this fellow's heart away from God? Yes, something did; it was not false teachings, persecution, etc.; rather, it was his contact with evil women that turned his heart away from God.

Solomon loved his wives (**1 Kings 11:1**) and to please them, he defied the commandments of God and granted them their heart desires. The bad influence of Solomon's wives ruined his relationship with God. This is the reason why as Christians we should not be married to bad husbands and bad wives. A bad companion will come between you and God, in that, in order to please him or her, you would have to displease God. (**1 Kings 11:1-13**)

2. Jonadab misleads Amnon

Verses 1-2: Amnon's Forbidden Love

In these verses, Amnon, King David's son, falls in love with his half-sister Tamar. Consumed by his desire, he grows

physically ill, illustrating the severity of his obsession.

Verses 3-5: Jonadab's Devious Plan

Jonadab, Amnon's crafty cousin, suggests a ruse for Amnon to be alone with Tamar. Jonadab advises Amnon to pretend sickness and request that Tamar comes to nurse him.

Verses 6-14: Tamar's Violation

Amnon executes Jonadab's plan. Despite Tamar's pleas for him to cease his inappropriate advances, he overpowers and violates her. Tamar's despair and pain are clear, underlining the brutality of Amnon's actions.

The saying is true that evil communication corrupts good manners. *Reference* 2 Samuel 13

3. Jezebel corrupted Ahab

Jezebel made Ahab establish her native religion, which is the cult of Baal, in the Kingdom of Israel and appointed priests for the cult. Therefore, this couple thrust the kingdom of Israel deep into idolatry (**1 Kings 16:30-33**).

With the worship of Baal came the persecution of men of God. The wicked Queen Jezebel, in the quest to silence and remove the worship of God from Israel, killed many prophets of God. King Ahab was in the know of her wickedness, yet he gave her his seal of approval (**1 Kings 18:13**).

Ahab desired to buy Naboth's vineyard but Naboth did not sell it to him and he became sad. Then Jezebel devised a plan to take the vineyard for Ahab. She wrote

letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and nobles in Naboth's city. The letters instructed them to falsely accuse Naboth of blasphemy and have him stoned to death. The people followed Jezebel's orders, and Naboth was killed. Then Jezebel had Ahab take Naboth's vineyard. (**1 Kings 21:8-10**).

Once again the marriage of King Ahab to Jezebel reminds us of the saying 'Evil communication corrupts good manners'.

4. The evil woman Delilah, the mistress of Samson, when she got to know Samson's secret, betrayed him. According to the deal, Delilah was to receive eleven hundred pieces of silver from each of the lords of the Philistines for successfully leading them to Samson's capture (**Judges 16:5**). Judas Iscariot, who became a bad disciple, betrayed Jesus for 30 silver pieces.

Dangers of evil communications

When a Christian finds himself amid bad company, he turns to be ashamed of his faith and the righteousness thereof. In that in order to fit in the bad company, he has to either abandon or compromise on his Christian virtues; by so doing, he will find the ease to indulge in the sinful things they do. Now to be ashamed, or to abandon, or to compromise on your Christian faith and virtues.

"Pursue Peace With Everyone"

Evil communications corrupt good manners' does not give Christians the leverage to view their neighbors as evil and begin to hate them or stigmatize

them. The Bible teaches Christians that we should live in peace with everyone irrespective of their religious, cultural, or moral background. And the Bible teaches that we should be good to all, both Christian and unbelievers. **Hebrews 12:14** Therefore, we should greet, respect, and be helpful to all, whether good or bad.

When any of your family members such as wife, mother, father, uncle, siblings, etc. prove to be a bad companion in your life, Scriptures like **Luke 14:26** and **Matthew 10:37**, should remind you that nothing should stand between you and God.

What to do if you find yourself in an evil communication

For any professing Christian who has joined bad company and for any professing Christian who is affiliated to any secret society, or cult, or secret organization, or secret club, this is what God tells you to do:

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

GOSSIP

Proverbs 18:8

Who am I? I have no respect for justice. I maim without killing. I break hearts and ruin lives. I am cruel and malicious and gather strength with age. The more I am quoted, the more I am believed. I flourish at every level of society. My victims are

helpless. They cannot protect themselves against me because I have no name and no face. To track me down is impossible. The harder you try, the more elusive I become. I'm nobody's friend. Once I tarnish a reputation, it is never the same. I topple governments and ruin marriages. I destroy careers and cause heartache and sleepless nights. I wreck churches and separate Christians. I spawn suspicion and generate grief, make innocent people cry on their pillows. Even my name hisses. **I am gossip.**

We probably regard gossip as a little sin. it is insignificant when compared with some others, I we say. In fact, the world has elevated it to an art form with gossip columns and even TV gossip shows. But is that the way God sees it?

The New Testament Greek word for "gossip" (*psithuristes*, **Romans 1:29**) is literally "a whisperer" — a person who whispers behind your back with the intention of hurting you. The Bible links gossip and slander together as sister sins (Romans 1:29-30). The New Testament word "slander" (*katalalos*) means "to speak evil of someone." When we gossip, we speak evil about people; we badmouth them.

Gossip Originates from the Evil in Our Hearts

In **Luke 6:45** Jesus tells us, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his

heart his mouth speaks.” Jesus tells us that our words reveal what is in our hearts. Gossip comes from a heart full of evil. Insults come from a heart full of evil. Criticism comes from a heart full of evil. When we allow our sinful natures to control our hearts, evil fills our souls, and evil spews out of mouths.

Gossip Can Be the Result of Hatred

In *Psalms 109:3* the Old Testament King David said of his enemies, “With words of hatred they surround me; they attack me without cause.” When we allow hurt, anger, bitterness, and rage to live in our hearts, we entertain thoughts of hatred, retaliation, and revenge (*Ephesians 4:31*). One way that we vent our anger, bitterness, and rage is through gossip. We retaliate by shooting people in the back with verbal bullets. Unless we find comfort for our hurt and resolution for our anger, we often vent our hurt and anger with our tongues.

Gossip Is a Product of Idleness

1 Timothy 5:13 tells us how idleness can lead to gossip: “Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.” People with too much time on their hands often become gossips and busybodies. As the saying goes, “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.”

Gossip Spreads Falsehood

Ephesians 4:25 says, “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.” When we gossip,

facts are distorted. Lies are spoken as truth. Half-truths are heralded as gospel. Gossip may have an ounce of truth to it. But gossip is usually combined with a ton of lies. People often have the attitude, “Don’t bother me with the facts. My mind is already made up.”

Gossip Separates Friends

Proverbs 16:28 says, “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” In a few seconds gossip can ruin a friendship that took years to build. Not only does gossip ruin friendships. Gossip can do great harm to a church.

People leave churches when they believe gossip. People leave churches when they have been wounded by gossip. Churches have split over gossip started by a single person. *Proverbs 6:19* tells us that of the 7 sins God hates, the sin God hates the most is stirring up dissension among His people.

The Antidote for Gossip

We know that gossip originates with Satan. We know that gossip is a product of our sinful nature. We know how incredibly destructive gossip is. Now we need to consider God’s antidote for gossip.

Overlook an Offense

Proverbs 17:9 says, “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” Overlooking an offense is an act of love and friendship. It is also a sign of Christian maturity. Christians can be too thin skinned. We can wear our feelings

on our shoulders. We need to develop rhinoceros thick skin. If you must talk about the offense, talk to the person who offended you, and that person alone.

Don't Listen to Gossipers

Proverbs 20:19 tells us, "A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much." Did you hear that verse? Don't listen to gossipers and their gossip. God's word says, avoid the gossiper. When someone begins to gossip to you, tell them plainly, "I don't want to hear any gossip. We don't want gossip hurting our church." Don't worry about offending them by telling them you don't want to hear any gossip. Gossipers need to be put in their place.

Confront Gossipers

If someone gossips about you, Jesus tells us how to confront them in **Matthew 18:15-17**.

First, speak to the person one-on-one. If that doesn't work, bring a couple of spiritually mature Christian friends with you to confront them. We must confront people with the right facts and the right spirit. Ephesians 4:15 tells us, "Speak the truth in love."

Watch Your Tongue Carefully

Ephesians 4:29 says, "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." Watch your tongue. If your words tear people down rather than building them up, keep quiet. As my mother used to tell me, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

Once gossip gets out, it gets out of control. Once it gets into the wind of people's ears, there's no way to put things back together again.

Jesus warns us about sins of the tongue in **Matthew 12:36**: "I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." We all need to pray **Psalms 141:3**: "Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."

When is it gossip and when is it not?

The "THINK" principle

T – is it true

H – is it helpful

I – is it inspirational

N – is it necessary

K – is it kind

Let us resolve to not speak against one another.

IMMORAL JESTING

Jesting and crude joking are attempts to elicit laughs by crossing a line into impropriety. The use of foul language, sexual innuendo, or rude or racist comments means that a so-called joke had to appeal to baser instincts in order to earn laughs. **Ephesians 5:3-4** warns against jesting: "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be **obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking**, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving." It is interesting that jesting is included in this list of more

grievous sins that are “improper for God’s holy people.”

Jesting and crude joking do not reflect the new life we have in Christ. God desires to transform us by renewing our minds and sanctifying our spirits (**Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3**). We are walking temples, dedicated to the glory of God (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). Physical body parts that were once dedicated to sin become “instruments of righteousness” (**Romans 6:12-13**). Our mouths are part of our bodies and a significant part of that transformation. From our mouths should come worship and praise, edification and encouragement, truth and blessing (**James 3:9-12**). Controlling our mouths is part of true religion: “If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his religion is worthless” (**James 1:26**).

The story of Elisha and the bears is found in 2 Kings 2:23-25. Elisha was walking to Bethel when some boys came out of town and jeered at him. Elisha called down a curse on the boys, and two bears appeared, mauling 42 of the boys.

The Bible says that our words are powerful, and we need to treat them with respect (**Proverbs 18:21**). **Part of maturing in Christ is learning to filter what comes out of our mouths.** Some people give themselves a pass on questionable banter and coarse jesting because “it’s just a joke.” But **Proverbs 26:19** warns against those who hide

behind the phrase “I was only joking!” Jokes do not give us an excuse to sin. When our thoughts have been purified by immersing ourselves in God’s Word, our speech will change (see **Philippians 4:8**), and immoral jesting will feel foreign on our tongues. Crude jesting will leave a bad taste in our spirits and echo like a clattering gong in our ears. If we belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit will draw us toward repentance when we’ve crossed a line. Coarse jesting and crude joking have no place in the life of a follower of Christ.

(Psalm 1:1) A scornful person makes jokes of the things of God even when they are in church. After church they crack jokes about what happened, they make everything trivial, funny and inconsequential. They mock God, they mock the church, they mock pastors and they mock other Christians. They make jokes about how people walk, how people dress, how people talk and how the church does something. When they come to church they look for funny spots about somebody led singing, about how a certain usher is dressed. They trivialize things related to God and spirituality.

They use intelligence and humour to defend sin. When you tell them, something is wrong they will try to philosophize it, intellectualize it, and make it funny and defend it. They are very good in arguments and they put loop holes in your spiritual beliefs. They misrepresent and misquote the scriptures. They make you feel that what you believe has no spiritual validation. They glamourize sin without any shame.

They make sin grand and adventurous. They will tell you their exploits in evil but will speak it with glamour and grand gestures and grand experiences. They

make it look like there is something you are missing and they make it look appetizing.

Conclusion:

Proverb 12:26 (NKJV) The righteous should choose his friend carefully.