

## Perilous Times – Implication to Christians

# FALSE ACCUSERS

## II Timothy 3:3

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*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be **false accusers** (KJV); **slanderers** (NKJV) - 2 Timothy 3:1-3.*

Paul warns that difficult times will come in the last days, a reality we are already witnessing and experiencing today. He also points out that during these times, some people will adopt the harmful behavior of falsely accusing, speaking ill of, and slandering others—traits that reflect the nature of the devil.

### A CLOSER LOOK

"Malicious gossips" (**Greek word: *diabolos* [dee-ab'-ol-os]**)—individuals prone to slander and falsely accusing others... individuals who, in their thoughts and actions, resemble the devil, relying on him in both mind and will, and are guided by him (**Thayer, 135**); "a traducer, accuser, or slanderer" (**Robinson, 168**).

A false accuser, a slanderer, a malicious gossip spreads false or damaging information about someone, with the intention of harming their reputation.

The Greek word ***diabolos***, which is often associated with the devil, helps us understand this behavior. As Thayer explain, this word refers to one who, in his or her thoughts and actions, resemble the devil, relying on him in both mind and will, and are guided by him.

James offered additional insight on this matter. **James 4:11-12** - <sup>11</sup>*Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.* <sup>12</sup>*There is one Lawgiver, who is*

*able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?*

We know that the devil takes pleasure in the fall of someone who is supposed to be a child of God, and sadly, the world does too. When a well-known Christian sins, social media often revels in spreading the news, highlighting it to the point where it seems there is no hope for recovery. Whenever that sin is mentioned, it is brought up again and again. Both Satan and the world take pleasure in the downfall of a Christian.

But is it only Satan and the world who enjoy talking about such situations? Unfortunately, we all do. If one of us—a member of the church, especially a well-known one, a worker, or a leader (youth, women, or men)—commits a sin or makes a terrible mistake, the news spreads like wildfire.

Even worse, sometimes the information shared about a brother or sister isn't true, yet we pass it on without verifying it, simply to ensure that the person is seen in a negative light. The painful part is that we do this with a sense of delight.

Eventually, false accusers, slanderers betray the trust of those who share their problems with them.

Why is it that we take pleasure in knowing and telling bad things about one another? A question we should reflect on and possibly address in this lesson.

### HOW EXPERIENCE HELPS US UNDERSTAND

Many of us have experienced the pain of malicious gossip—felt the sting of its harmful stories. And just as many of us have also participated in malicious gossip,

unknowingly causing harm to others in ways we may never fully understand.

During World War II, there was widespread fear that vital military information might fall into the hands of German spies. In response, a slogan was coined to prevent careless talk: "LOOSE LIPS, SINK SHIPS!"

The church has often been wounded by malicious gossip. Let me share a story I came across that holds a powerful lesson.

**Mildred**, the church malicious gossip and self-appointed moral guardian, was always sticking her nose into other people's affairs. Although several members disapproved of her meddling, they were too intimidated to speak up. However, Mildred made a serious mistake when she accused **George, a new member**, of being an alcoholic after spotting his old pickup truck parked outside the town's bar one afternoon.

She eagerly told George and others that anyone seeing the truck would know exactly what he was up to.

George, a man of few words, simply stared at her for a moment and walked away without a word of explanation, defense, or denial.

Later that evening, George parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house, walked home, and left it there all night.

There is a story about a boy who spread a rumor about his neighbor, making the neighbor look bad while, by comparison, making himself look good. For a time, he enjoyed the feeling that came from the malicious gossip.

However, when someone later spread a rumor about him, he quickly realized how painful such stories could be. Feeling regretful, he went to his neighbor, humbled and apologetic.

The wise neighbor accepted his apology but asked the boy to do him a favor. "Go home, take your feather pillow, and cut it open," the neighbor instructed. "Then come back to my house, allowing the feathers to scatter behind you." The boy did as instructed. When he returned, the neighbor said, "Now, go and collect all the feathers so we can fix your pillow."

The boy turned around and saw that the feathers were blowing all over the neighborhood, scattered by the wind. He ran to gather them, but could only collect half of them. Out of breath, he returned to the neighbor and said, "This is impossible. I can't collect them all."

The neighbor replied, "That's exactly what malicious gossip is like. You've apologized, and I accept your apology, but the damage is already done. Just as you can never retrieve all the feathers, you can never undo the harm caused by the story you've spread. It's out there in the minds of everyone who has heard it."

### **CAUTION POINT**

False accusers, malicious gossips, and slanderers often start as chronic fault-finders. They are quick to criticize wrongly and spread rumors, which bring sorrow and shame to the church. As James writes in **James 3:5**, *Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!*

False accusers, malicious gossips, and slanderers frequently causes irreparable harm. Once words are spoken, they cannot be fully retracted. We can repent, but the damage caused by gossip is nearly impossible to undo.

### **GOD'S PERSPECTIVES ON THIS**

God has never viewed favorably those who speak negatively about others, who falsely accuse others or who slander others.

**Proverbs 20:19** *He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.*

**Romans 1:29, 30** <sup>29</sup> *being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil mindedness; they are whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.*

In **Colossians 3:8b**, Paul identifies slander and abusive speech as sins. In **1 Timothy 3:11**, women were commanded not to be slanderers or false accusers.

However, God has provided insight into why He does not want us to be false accusers or slanderers.

### **Regard for One Another**

The first reason we should refrain from speaking against and speaking evil of each other is the respect we should have for one another.

Where is our brotherly and sisterly love? As brethren, we are bound by love, symbolized by our shared family bond.

Scripture teaches that when we know something about our brother or sister, instead of malicious gossiping, we are to go directly to him or her.

*Matthew 18:15-17*<sup>15</sup> "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'<sup>17</sup> And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

### **Regard for God's Law**

Our regard for God's Law should also prevent us from speaking against others. James writes, *He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.*

James highlights the serious implications of malicious gossip: First, we break the law we are meant to follow. Second, we place ourselves above the law. The law says, "*Love one another,*" but by our words and actions, we suggest that the law was wrong, and that it should say, "*Criticize and slander one another.*" In effect, we're claiming to know better than God, who gave the law.

### **Regard for God**

We should refrain from malicious gossip out of respect for God. James reminds us, <sup>12</sup> *There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.*

God is the only one who has the right to change or nullify the law He gave. Our

actions don't alter the law; they only break it. It would be presumptuous to think we know better than God, the one who gave the law. Not only is God the Lawgiver, but He is also the only Judge with the qualifications to judge. He knows all the facts, is free from sin, and understands us fully because He created us. When we speak against our brother, we are acting as if we have the authority to make judgments, a role that belongs to God alone.

### **Regard for Ourselves**

We should avoid speaking against and speaking evil of our brother because of how we ought to regard ourselves. *James 4:12* asks, *who are you to judge another?*

This verse hits hard. If Jesus looked at us while we gossip or wrongly criticize or slander or falsely accuse, He might call us out as hypocrites. In light of our own flaws, we should be slow to judge others, remembering that we are no better.

### **WHY ARE WE SO PRONE TO ENGAGE IN WHAT DISPLEASES GOD?**

Maybe Will Rogers summed up our attitude about gossip best when he said, *the only time people dislike gossip is when you gossip about them.*

It may be that we feel better about ourselves when we know something bad about somebody else. That seems to be the only logical reason for gossip.

### **THE WAY OUT**

Falsely accusing people, spreading malicious gossip, or slandering others is a sin that arises from the way we relate to others. It is a sin of the mouth, but it originates in the heart.

The only way to truly stop or repent of this sin is not by merely controlling our words, simply trying to control what we say won't suffice but by undergoing a transformation of the heart.

We must make conscious efforts to put off all these sins. We must strive to control his tongue, to avoid sinning with our lips in any way.

We must also incorporate prayer and fasting, along with a commitment to adhere to the principles set by God.

## **SUMMARY**

Unfortunately, as Paul pointed out, these negative traits are evident even among Christians. We must set ourselves apart from the world. Attacking another's character is a sin to be cast aside.

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