

GOSSIP & THE POWER OF OUR WORDS

A focused companion to [How Does God Change Us?](#)

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

A conversation can give us a sense of belonging while costing someone else their dignity or privacy. This worksheet helps you recognize when sharing becomes gossip, understand what draws you into it, and practice speech that protects confidence and serves a good purpose.

Gossip and the Power of Our Words

Our words affect more than the conversation we are having. They can shape how someone is viewed, whether a friendship feels safe, and whether a church community grows in trust or becomes divided. Scripture takes gossip seriously because God cares about the people our words can hurt.

Gossip damages trust and separates people. Proverbs 16:28 warns that gossip separates close friends. Sharing someone's private struggles, repeating an accusation, or speculating about their motives can plant suspicion where there was once trust. Information does not have to be false to be harmful; something can be true and still be inappropriate to share.

Destructive speech can spread far beyond its beginning. James 3:5–10 compares the tongue to a small spark capable of setting a forest on fire. A passing comment can become a repeated story, draw others into taking sides, and damage relationships throughout a community. Proverbs 26:20 teaches that without gossip, a quarrel loses its fuel. Choosing not to repeat a story can help stop the harm.

God calls us to protect unity and speak in ways that build others up. Proverbs 6:16–19 names lying, false testimony, and stirring up conflict among the things the Lord hates. Ephesians 4:29 gives us a positive direction: speak what will benefit others and meet their needs. Before speaking, we can ask: *Is this mine to share? Does this person need to know? Will sharing help address a concern, or simply spread it?*

Guarding our speech also means examining what is happening in our hearts. We may gossip to feel included, express resentment, gain attention, or make ourselves look better. Recognizing that motive helps us bring it honestly to God and practice a more loving response.

Seeking help is different from gossip. Reporting harm, receiving counseling, or sharing necessary information with someone responsible for addressing a problem can be appropriate and important. The aim is to speak truth responsibly, with a helpful purpose and an appropriate listener.

This worksheet will help you recognize what draws you into gossip, consider the effect of your words, and practice speech that protects trust and reflects Christ's love.

Choose one recent example. Work through pages 1–3, then use page 4 for seven days. Read the Scripture passages in context. The aim is honest responsibility and practiced change in response to God's grace, not earning His love.

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1 Notice your pattern

Describe one recent conversation in which you shared, invited, or listened to information about someone else. What did you say or encourage? Use initials and avoid recording the private details again but be honest. God can't take away a bad habit you don't own.

What drew you into the conversation: belonging, curiosity, anger, comparison, concern, or something else? What did you hope sharing would accomplish?

Who needed this information, and for what purpose? How might sharing it have affected the person's privacy, reputation, or relationships?

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2 Bring the pattern into the light of Scripture

Read each passage below. The notes explain the connection to this topic; they are summaries and applications, not quotations. Choose one passage to study more closely.

Proverbs 11:13 — This proverb contrasts exposing a confidence with being trustworthy. Consider whether information entrusted to you is yours to repeat.

Proverbs 16:28 — The proverb warns that gossip can separate close friends. Consider the relational effect of your words, not only whether your story is accurate.

Ephesians 4:29–32 — Paul calls believers to speak in ways that build others up and to replace destructive attitudes with kindness. Ask what would benefit the people affected.

Which passage most directly challenges your conversation? Write its reference and explain what it asks you to change.

What belief makes gossip appealing—for example, “Sharing this will help me fit in”? Write the belief, then a more truthful response supported by the passage.

Before sharing next time, how will you decide whether the purpose, listener, and amount of detail are appropriate? If help is needed, identify a suitable person to approach.

Guarding the heart includes attending to our thoughts, feelings, understanding, and will (Proverbs 4:23). Consider which repeated messages you need to stop cultivating and which truth you need to remember and apply.

Scripture sources: Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 16:28; Ephesians 4:29–32; Proverbs 4:23. Read the full passages at BibleGateway.com. For the Hebrew meaning of heart, see the NET Bible translation notes on Proverbs 4:23.

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3 Choose and practice a different response

Pause before repeating a story. Check whether it is yours to share, whether the listener needs it, and whether the purpose is helpful. You can say, “I don’t want to repeat their private information,” or “If we are concerned, who can actually help?” Redirect the conversation. When seeking support, share what is needed with an appropriate person.

When this happens	A response I can practice	A belief to remember
<i>Friends begin discussing someone’s private struggle.</i>	<i>“I don’t want to share their details. Let’s change the subject.”</i>	<i>I can seek connection without exposing someone else.</i>

Make the plan your own. Describe one observable action, not only a feeling you hope to have. Write a specific time or occasion for arranging support or changing a routine.

Part of my plan	My specific choice
The cue I will watch for	
What I will do or say instead	
Scripture reference and truth I will remember	
An influence, access point, or routine I will change	
Support I will use and when I will arrange it	

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What needs repair? You may need to stop repeating the story, correct misinformation with the people who heard it, or apologize appropriately. Describe one step without spreading the story further. If no repair is needed, write that.

If the old response happens again, stop, acknowledge your choice, repair harm where needed, and adjust the plan. Review what happened before the response rather than concluding that change is impossible.

4 Practice for seven days and review

Each day, briefly record the situation, your response, and what you learned. If there was no opportunity, write that. Notice progress and difficulty honestly. The record helps you learn; it does not measure your worth or God's love.

Day or date	Situation and response I practiced	What I learned or will adjust
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

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Review at the end of the week

How did your conversations change? Where did you protect privacy or redirect gossip, and where do you still need a clearer boundary?

What will you continue or change next week? Name one action and any additional help you need.

Prayer: Father, help me seek connection without harming others. Teach me to speak truth with care, protect what is entrusted to me, and take responsibility for my words. Amen.