



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 31, August 5, 2014 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

BEWARE OF EVIL REPORTS— giving or receiving them!

The tongue can defile an entire family, neighborhood, nation, and certainly a local church! (James 3:6-10) The tongue can be a restless evil, full of the deadly poison of slander. LET US REMEMBER: Sin entered the Garden of Eden via the receiving of a satanic slander against God! Today, one of satan's strategies is to get Christians to accuse one another, to be bitter one toward another, to gossip about one another, and/or to slander one another. **If we are to successfully advance in the cause of Christ in 2014 and beyond— we must heed clear Biblical instruction on how to win the battle over the deadly poison of slander, gossip, discord, evil reports.**

What causes conflicts in families, churches, missionary teams, or organizations to flare out of control and split the entire group? What causes close friendships to be broken even when neither party offended the other? Why are attempts to restore a struggling, weakened, or fallen Christian brother or sister often met with defeat? **ANSWER:** A MAJOR CAUSE IS WRONG RESPONSES TO AN EVIL REPORT.

WHAT IS AN EVIL REPORT? An evil report MAY or MAY NOT be deliberate; nevertheless it **involves distortion of facts, incomplete facts, and/or false information.** AN EVIL REPORT is often given with wrong motivations and cause the hearer to come to inaccurate conclusions and to respond with unbiblical "solutions". **Evil reports are**

so destructive that they can even destroy long-lasting, close friendships: "*A whisperer separateth chief friends*" (Proverbs 16:28).

**** IMPORTANT NOTE:** REAL wrong doing, wickedness, and/or CRIMES should never be covered up. GENUINE EVIL or wrong doing **must be** brought to the attention of those who are responsible to deal with it; and such matters must be dealt with in a Scriptural manner. **WE MUST ALL BE ALERT TO THE FOLLOWING FIVE STAGES OF DEFILEMENT— IGNORANCE; EXPOSURE; CONTAMINATION; INFECTION; DISEASE.** [Note: In this article WE ARE NOT using the word 'ignorance' in any sort of demeaning way; but in the true meaning of the word: lack of knowledge.]

I. IGNORANCE- Satan will gain an advantage over us if we are ignorant of his devices. (See 2 Corinthians 2:11.) ****Ignorance is not being aware of the destructive power of untrue or distorted words.** "*The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; it DEFILETH the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell*" (James 3:6).

1. Ignorance of how words destroy close friendships: "*... he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends*" (Proverbs 17:9).

2. Ignorance of what constitutes an evil report: It is a distorted or false report which influences us to form an evil opinion about another person before the whole truth is known.

3. Ignorance of how evil reports are given: Evil reports are communicated by words, facial expressions, gestures, and tonal patterns. They can be subtle or obvious, quiet or angry, sweet or bitter. The giver may be sincere and unaware that he/she is passing on a false report.

4. IGNORANCE OF WHO GIVES EVIL REPORTS: Giving bad reports is part of the fallen nature of every person. We are ALL capable of giving evil reports. We are ALL capable of being deceived by such reports; and/or of carelessly passing them on even in the name of good.

* **WHISPERER:** One who secretly or privately passes on evil reports to others (Psalm 41:7).

* **GOSSIP:** One who magnifies and sensationalizes rumors and partial information. (See 1 Cor. 5:11 - railer).

* **SLANDERER:** One who seeks to destroy another's credibility or reputation with damaging facts, distortions of facts, and/or evil suspicions (See Numbers 14:36).

* **BUSYBODY:** One who digs up evil reports and makes it his/her business to spread them by means of gossip, slander, or whispering. **God warns:** "*let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters*" (I Peter 4:15).

5. Ignorance of what motivates evil reports: (See James 3:14-18) **BITTERNESS:** Reacting because of personal hurts. **REBELLION:** Justifying an independent spirit. **DECEPTION:** Believing that evil reports are right to give. **PRIDE:** Wanting to exalt self. **GUILT:** Justifying past actions or attitudes. **ENVY:** Desiring what belongs to another.

6. Ignorance of how susceptible we are to evil reports: We enjoy hearing them because they exalt us. They bring down or hurt those whom we dislike. [Or we want the person giving the evil report to think well of us.]

7. Ignorance of how Satan uses evil reports: He uses evil reports to discredit spiritual leadership [At home, church, school, work or government]; to cause Christians to close their spirit toward each other; to multiply conflicts and produce more ungodliness; to prompt non-Christians to mock Christianity and reject Christ.

II. EXPOSURE- "*A prudent man forseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished*" (Proverbs 27:12). **EXPOSURE HAPPENS WHEN WE CARELESSLY ENTER INTO CONVERSATION WITH A PERSON WHO IS A CARRIER OF AN EVIL REPORT.**

GOD'S WORD WILL HELP US TO BE ALERT TO VARIOUS DANGERS: "*Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off.*" (Psalm 101:5). "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret*" (Eph 5:10-12). "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them* (Romans 16:17).

BLESSED GIFTS: We have protective physical defense to warn us about physical contamination— we can smell it or see it or taste it. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of contamination until it is too late. **In the same way God gives us protective spiritual defenses to warn us about spiritual contamination.** We can sense the promptings

of God's Holy Spirit, follow the warnings of God's Word, and obey the wise counsel of our human authorities. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of spiritual danger until it is too late.

HELPS IN DETECTING A CARRIER OF AN EVIL REPORT:

1. A carrier may test your spirit before giving you the evil report. Any evidence of a compatible spirit in you will encourage him/her to give you the report.

2. A carrier may check your acceptance of his report before giving it to you. He may do this by asking for your opinion about the person or by dropping a negative comment and observing your response to it.

3. A carrier may try to get you to ask for the evil report by creating curiosity for it. Some starters might be: "Have you heard about (the person)?" "Wait 'til I tell you about (the person)!" [More subtle: "I probably should not talk about this... just pray for So and So!]

4. A carrier may communicate an evil report by asking us for counsel or by sharing a concern for the person involved. [Prayer requests can be evil reports in disguise!]

5. A carrier may use evil reports to get you to admire him or her because of being on the inside and having access to privileged information.

6. A carrier may set forth one-sided accusations against an absent person, seeking to build sympathy for themselves, seeking to ingrain a bad impression about the absent person.

IMPORTANT Questions to ask before listening to a possible carrier:

1. "What is your reason for wanting to tell me negative information about 'so and so' in their absence?" Widening the circle of gossip only compounds the problem.

2. "Where did you get your information?" Refusal to identify the source of information is a sure signal of an evil report. (Even as is asking you to 'promise not to tell anyone!') BEWARE OF SUCH PROMISES. **You might say something like,** "I will promise not to tell anyone so long as keeping that promise does not require me to disobey God, or potentially

cause danger to you or others in the body of Christ, or violate my conscience before God!

3. "Have you gone to those directly involved?" Spirituality is not measured by how well we accuse or expose an offender, but by how effectively we seek to restore an offender (Galatians 6:1).

4. "Have you personally checked out all of the facts?" "Facts" become distorted when not balanced with other facts or when given with negative motives. (Prov. 18:17; 20:6; 21:2)

5. "When I check this out to make double sure that we have the facts— may I quote you?"

III. DEFILEMENT- *"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly"* (Proverbs 26:22).

Defilement is receiving an evil report from another person and believing that it is true.

** Reality: Even after one hears 'BOTH SIDES'... the truth still may not be known. ** To 'take sides' after only hearing 'one side' is foolish— Proverbs 18:13; 18:17; 20:6; 21:2.

In the same way that touching a diseased person will defile one's hands, listening to an evil report will defile one's mind. This is a reality which must be properly dealt with: *"Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled"* (Heb 12:15).

TRAGIC EXAMPLE of many listening to an evil report: Absalom used an innocent sounding evil report to steal the hearts of almost an entire nation and lead it in revolt against his own father, King David. The report emphasized his "concern" for suffering people, his "deep desire" that justice be done and his "ability" to be a better administrator than his father. **Actually, Absalom was bitter** because his father did not bring judgment to Absalom's half-brother for immorality, so he took matters into his own hands and was rejected for it. (2 Samuel 15:1-6)

IV. INFECTION- *"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going"* (Proverbs 14:15). *"As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife"* (Proverbs 26:21).

Infection is responding to an evil report with human reasoning and emotion rather than with spiritual understanding and genuine love.

"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips" (Proverbs 17:4). **If the defilement of an evil report is not cleansed— wrong attitudes, opinions, conclusions, and actions will follow...** even toward very close friends, "*a whisperer separateth chief friends*" (Proverbs 16:28).

SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION:

1. Believing the evil report is true— even though you don't have all the facts; and/or have not heard both sides of the case, firsthand.
2. Forming negative opinions based on the incomplete report.
3. Focusing on negative aspects of the person involved.
4. Interpreting the person's words and actions as "supporting evidence".
5. Judging motives on the basis of the evil report.
6. Backing away from the person in your spirit.
7. Telling the evil report to others.

V. DISEASE- "*A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips*" (Proverbs 17:4). **DISEASE IS BEING MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY CONTROLLED BY THE EVIL REPORT AND BY THE DESTRUCTIVE SPIRIT OF THE ONE WHO GAVE IT TO US.** "*He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart*" (Prov 26:24, 25). "*Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people*" (Leviticus 19:16). **A diseased Christian has grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit by taking up the offenses of others, making them his own, and adding to them.**

SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE:

- 1. Developing** bitterness and/or rebellion, even though the person involved did not directly offend us.
- 2. Setting** ourselves up as the judge in matters which are God's responsibility, and recruiting others to "our side".
- 3. Searching out** evil reports and using them to give the worst possible impression: "*An ungodly man diggeth up evil and in his lips there is as a burning fire*" (Proverbs 16:27).
- 4. Believing** that such actions are actually accomplishing God's will rather than realizing that we give non-Christians occasion to blaspheme God's name because of our lack of genuine love: "*I speak to your shame-brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you... ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren: (I Cor 6:5-8).*"

Often we do not act on information when we should do so because the defilement or infection hinders God's grace in us. **

Attempts to restore a Christian who has been overtaken in a fault will usually fail unless the defilement of listening to evil reports is **first cleansed and then replaced** with the spirit of Christ's love, humility, and forgiveness.

HOW TO CLEANSE OUR MINDS FROM AN EVIL REPORT:

- 1. Ask God to cleanse your mind** from the defilement of an evil report.
- 2. Pray for God to give you genuine love** for each one involved in the evil report.
- 3. Cleanse your mind** with appropriate Scripture: **Have I accepted the evil report as true?** *"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going" (Proverbs 14:15). "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins?" (Psalms 19:13).*

Presumptuousness is taking a matter for granted and assuming it to be true in the absence of proof to the contrary.

Has the evil report affected how I feel toward the person involved? *"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:4) "For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Romans 2:1). "Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8). "Love thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity?" (I Corinthians 13:5, 6).*

Do I have an urge to tell someone else the evil report? *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). "A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" (Proverbs 11:13). "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, but he that repeateth a matter separateth very [close] friends" (Proverbs 17:9).*

I can know my heart is clean,

When I lose my urge to tell someone else the evil report.

When I grieve over the fact that a report was given.

When I have genuine love toward the person involved in the report.

When I am prompt to examine my own life in failures.

Act on what you heard: Is God directing you to contact the one who gave you the evil report? *** To ask the five questions which identify an evil report? *** To emphasize the importance of speaking the truth in love (See John 17:20-26; Phil 2:1-4).

Is God directing you to contact the person involved in the evil report in order to check out the facts and help restore in the spirit of meekness? (See Matthew 18:15-18; Gal 6:1).

**Is God directing you to contact those who are spiritually responsible for the situation?
(1 Corinthians 1:11)**

Once they are informed, the responsibility for further action rests with them. [1 Corinthians 1-16 is the positive fruit of the house of Chloe informing the Apostle Paul!] Your responsibility is to continue to pray for those involved in the situation.

(This article is edited from material from Institute in Life Principles)

BOUNDING Grace to all in Christ!

James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM! ****

NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

→ NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— August 14 @ 11:00AM, led by Cindy Bell

*** SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! ***

**~~~~ SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST 10, 24
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- 1. 9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
- 2. 10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
- 3. Noon- Covered-dish Fellowship Meal**
- 4. 1pm- Early Afternoon Service, fellowship hall**

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST 17→ Lord's Supper & Home Groups!**

- 1. 9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
- 2. 10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church/ **LORD'S SUPPER**
- 3. NO noon meal.... PLEASE JOIN IN THE WONDERFUL FELLOWSHIP with ONE OF THE Sunday Evening HOME GROUPS: a. Same groups. b. Study Philippians 4. c. Locations to be announced.**

## **SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR AUGUST 31→ Sunday Evening PRAISE!**

- 1. 9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
- 2. 10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
- 3. NOON FELLOWSHIP MEAL**
- 4. FIFTH SUNDAY EVENING PRAISE @ 6:00PM→ Let us all come together with various ones sharing Scriptures, sharing testimonies, singing unto the LORD: solo; duet; trio; quartet; ensemble; congregation.**

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**SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!** Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>