

# *“Not Malicious Gossips”*

by Jan Patterson

## **Memory Verse:**

*“Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.”*

~ Ps. 141:3

## **Introduction**

- 1) The only negative command in our passage of Titus 2:3-5
- 2) The Scripture doesn't lie and it says, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. . .,”* Jeremiah 17:9, KJV.

## **I. What It Is**

- A. Plural of the Greek word used three times, all in Timothy and Titus. The word is “diabolos” and is translated every other time in the NT as *“the devil!”* (as in Matt. 4)

***“Older women . . . are not  
to be [like] the devil.”  
~ Titus 2:3***

B. Various meanings and synonyms:

- 1) Slander – false information about a person.
- 2) Gossip – “talk of a personal, sensational or intimate nature.”
- 3) To accuse – “charge with a shortcoming or error.”
- 4) Synonyms include “defame, vilify, blacken, libel.”
- 5) For our purposes – “to injure the reputation of another.”
- 6) “Setters at variant, or those who promote quarrels that they may gain from them.”
- 7) Those who “spread evil reports and invent them.”

C. Something in our fallen nature wants to hear or speak of things of a “personal, sensational or intimate nature.”



## II. How Prone We Are

A. The Scripture's only actual command against this is to women, and Christian women at that, and actually to Christian women leaders, in both passages (Tit. 2:3 and I Tim. 3:11).

B. Quotes from various commentators

- 1) Albert Barnes: “. . . mingling as they would with the church, and having an **opportunity** to claim acquaintance with many, it would be in their power, if they chose, to do great injury to the character of others,” (p. 149).
- 2) Source unknown: “For **in their gossip** many women like to tell others anything bad they have found out, and . . . **they get widely around.**”
- 3) Homer Kent: “The danger of unguarded speech by elderly women with **time on their hands** is obvious” (p.228).
- 4) Thomas Taylor: “The precept is especially directed to women, because of the **inclination** of their sex hereunto” (p.260).
- 5) Thomas Taylor: Our “age not only gives greater access to **opportunity**, but also the ‘right’ to speak, more than younger women” (p.260).

“Talkativeness is a disease of women,  
and it is increased by old age.”

~ John Calvin

C. Some things to think about as we examine our hearts:

- 1) Intimation or putting a “favorable construction” on our words
- 2) Changing the truth, even a little, or adding to it
- 3) Telling secret infirmities

“ . . . Love covers . . . ,” I Pet. 4:8

“ . . . a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter,” Prov. 11:13

- 4) Assigning motives. **We do not know the hearts of others.**
- 5) Silence!
- 6) Partial silence
- 7) Repeating a matter – details often and easily get changed
- 8) Encouraging gossip in others

### III. Its Effects

- A. Ruins the good name of another person.
- B. Blasphemes the Word of God (Titus 2:5).
- C. We are multiplying ourselves by our behavior and speech

D. Proverbs on a lying or slanderous tongue, a talebearer:

- 1) God hates it, 6:16-17 and 12:22.
- 2) Stirs up strife, 10:12 and 18
- 3) Reveals secrets instead of concealing them, 11:13
- 4) It *“breathes out”* lies (i.e., common), 14:5
- 5) Not becoming, or fitting, 17:7
- 6) Separates close friends, 16:28 and 17:9
- 7) Words are deep wounds, 18:8 and 26:22
- 8) Will not be unpunished, will not escape, 19:5
- 9) Hates its “victims,” 26:28

E. “The Devil’s gunpowder to blow up a whole world of wickedness.” (Taylor, p. 260; James 3:6, *“set on fire by hell.”*)

***“By these means . . . the whole profession of religion, is at this day traduced and disgraced.”***  
***~ Thomas Taylor***

## IV. How To Avoid It

- A. Awareness – notice the conversation of yourself and others.
- B. Repentance – name it, denounce it, turn from it, hate it.
- C. Prayer – Psalm 141:3 “*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.*”
- D. Inward principle and habit of Holiness.
  - 1) Matt. 15:19, “*For out of the heart come . . . slanders . . .*” and Matt. 12:34, “. . .*For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.*”
  - 2) ---Is your heart proud, envious, jealous?  
---Is your heart hateful, angry, or bitter?  
---Is your heart discontent?  
---Is your heart idle?  
---Is your heart careless?

OR

- 3) ---Is your heart filled with what is true, with the Word, with spiritual songs, with the fruits of the Spirit?

***The world will, to a great extent,  
judge the churches by the character  
which the gospel produces in its women.  
~ R. C. H. Lenski***

*“Life and death are in the power of the tongue.”*  
May ours tend daily to LIFE.  
(Prov. 18:21)



**Sources Consulted:**

The American Heritage College Dictionary

Exposition of Titus, Thomas Taylor

Notes on the New Testament, Albert Barnes

The Pastoral Epistles, Homer Kent

All Scripture references from NASB, unless otherwise indicated.