

## Gossip's Corrupt Fruit

by Tom Moody

"Gossip" is idle talk or rumors about others. The word can also be applied to the person who initiates or repeats idle talk.

Many jokes are made about gossip. Some seem to view gossip as a harmless exercise - an annoyance or nuisance at worst.

Christians should realize that gossip (Slander, tale bearing, being a busy body) is sinful and carries with it the potential of much heartache and devastation. The sinfulness and seriousness of gossip is clearly illustrated by its effects which are listed in a number of scriptures. Jesus made this point by comparing our words to fruit from a tree: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:33-34).

What is gossip's fruit?

1. *Gossip makes a fool of the one who practices it.* "...he that uttereth slander is a fool" (Proverbs 10:18).

2. *Gossip causes deep wounds.* "The words of a tale bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 26:22).

3. *Gossip will separate close friends.* "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16:28).

4. *Gossip brings shame upon the one who spreads it.* "Debate thy cause why thy neighbor himself; and disclose not a secret to another: lest he that heareth it put thee to shame and thine infamy turn not away" (Proverbs 25:9-10).

If you are tempted to gossip, work on purifying your heart (evil speech proceeds from the heart, Matthew 15:18-20). Increase your love for others, and learn to use your speech "to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).