

## ***Gossip's Corrupt Fruit***

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

1. GOSSIP MAKES A FOOL OF THE ONE WHO PRACTICES IT. "...he that uttereth a 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 forward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends", Proverbs 16:28.
4. GOSSIP BRINGS SHAME UPON THE TALE BEARER. "Debate thy cause with 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 (because 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.

**- by Tom Moody**

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## ***No, We Are Not Infallible***

An oft-repeated charge against members of the church of Christ is that we seem to think that we are infallible. Herein we intend to address ourselves to the validity or invalidity of such a charge with the aim of clearing up any mistaken impressions.

First of all, a fundamental principle upon which our examination must be based is the fact that NO MAN can truthfully claim infallibility! "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Since sin and infallibility cannot co-exist, we must conclude that all men are fallible including members of the church of Christ.

Secondly, I have never known of a member of the church who has claimed infallibility. I have known some few who ACTED as if they were perfect, and perhaps a few who thought they were. But the point is this: members of the church of Christ do not generally and publicly claim to be infallible humans.

How then did the charge originate? If we do not claim to be infallible, and in view of our constant references to such passages as Rom. 3:23, why do people think we claim perfection? Consider a few possible reasons.

(1) We believe in an infallible Christ. Unlike the modernists, we believe without any doubt that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, that He died on the cross for our sins, that He arose from the dead, and that He now serves us in heaven [as High Priest of God]. We believe what Peter declared on Pentecost when he said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). We are also convinced that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Our Savior is a Perfect One!

(2) We believe in infallible authority. After Jesus was raised from the dead, He declared: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). Later the apostle Paul wrote that God "hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:21-23). So the authority upon which our religion is based is infallible. The blind unfounded expressions of human authority are not approved by a God Who gave all authority to His Son.

(3) We believe in only one infallible way to heaven. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Thus it is our blessed belief that the way of Jesus is the only infallible way to glory. This means that we, with God, must reject the "many ways to heaven" concept, and do our best to encourage our religious neighbors to do the same.

No!! Members of the church of Christ are not infallible. But we believe in an infallible Savior Who has by His authority revealed through the New Testament the only infallible way to heaven. Some of us may fall from that way, 1 Cor. 10:12, and we may not always follow the example of our perfect Savior, but we firmly believe that "Ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10).

**- by Warren Berkley**

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## ***Train Up A Child***

Occasionally we hear a parent say, "I'm not going to force my children to go to church. I'll wait until they are old enough to decide for themselves about religion." This, of course, is pure folly! We don't wait until they are "old enough to decide for themselves" about things like personal hygiene or going to school. We instruct, encourage and insist that they make right choices in these important matters. Why would we wait until they are "old enough to decide for themselves" about their religious training – the MOST important thing in life?

Thankfully, there are many parents who understand the awesome obligation of "training up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). These are the ones who take seriously their responsibility to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). We commend all such parents who are working hard to fulfill this incredibly important God-given job.

Still, though, it seems that some folks need to take this concept to an even higher level. There are some good parents - godly people in their own right - who continue to struggle with how and when to teach their children certain moral principles. An excellent example of this is in the area of modesty. It is not uncommon to see parents who wouldn't be caught dead in certain types of clothing (shorts, swimming suits, etc.) but they allow their children to wear them. The idea is (we suppose) that they expect their children will grow up and somehow realize that such clothes are not suitable for those who "profess godliness" (1 Tim. 2:9,10). But, how will they learn this if they are not taught? They need instruction - consistent and specific instruction from an early age - so that they will develop their own sense of modesty and shamefacedness. If we wait until they are "old enough to decide for themselves," it will be too late. By postponing this instruction we will make it very hard - nearly impossible - for them to decide correctly.

Parents, if we hope to raise a "Timothy," we'll have to be like Lois and Eunice (2 Tim. 1 :5) and teach God's moral principles to our children from childhood (3:14,15). We dare not wait or delay this important work. Think!

**- by Greg Gwin**