

Three Things to Remember

Gospel Banner

Remember, three things come not back

The arrow sent upon its track.
It will not swerve, it will not stay
Its speed; it flies to wound and slay.

The spoken word so soon forgot
By thee; but it has perished not.
In other hearts, 'tis living still.
And doing work for good or ill.

And the lost opportunity,
That cometh back no more to thee;

In vain thou weepest, in vain dost yearn;
These three will nevermore return.

The Spreader

Author Unknown

On a well-equipped farm you will find at least one machine that looks like a low-slung wagon. It is called a "spreader". It is used to disperse seed and fertilizer.

Unfortunately, in every town, big or small, you will find men and women that might be placed in the category of the "spreader." They run about from place to place spreading gossip, which is the dirtiest kind of dirt. Gossip helps no one and harms every one. It is about the meanest

manifestation of dirty work that a human can do and not be exiled.

Slander

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when we hear a gossip at his work?

"Mad dog! Mad dog!" is a terrible clamor, but there are few curs whose bite is as dangerous as a busybody's tongue.

"Fire! Fire!" is an alarming note, but the talebearer's tongue is far more hot and destructive

"Beware of the ..."

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It is natural for most of us to want to listen to the concerns of those with whom we are in contact. It is also quite natural to want to help them with our suggestions. We must always be aware of what our ears are listening to. Much of the time a person has no idea the damage their words can do to themselves and their listeners. They may not even know they are "drowning" in their trials and tribulations, but a drowning man can take others down with himself. Beware of drowning men.

Although some of the quoted scriptures were in a different context, they were used to show a biblically taught principle.

"Chances are, if one speaks ill to you about others, when you are not around, he will speak ill of you."

— Barbara Brinkworth

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"Beware of the Drowning Man!"

Bill Brinkworth

It is said, that it is very dangerous when trying to swim out and save a drowning person. The natural reaction of the one going down, for possibly the last

time, is to keep their head above water. In an effort to survive, he can grab hold of the rescuer, and in trying to get another breath of air, drown the person who is trying to help him. Too often, the person, who is trying to save the person, is drowned by the flailing, panicking drowner.

A disgruntled, unhappy person is often much like the drowning man. For whatever the reason they are dissatisfied, they share their unrest and discontentment with others. In most situations, they mean no harm. They are unloading their burden and anguish to others in hopes that the person can say something or

change something to stop their dissatisfaction. However, their complaining, or "venting", does much the same thing as the drowning man. He can take the listener down with him.

The one listening may not know what is to follow in the conversation, or genuinely may want to be a consoling ear to the one doing the complaining. Before, the "rescuer" knows what has happened, he too is soon a casualty of gossiping lips that do more than "sink ships," as they used to say during World War II when they referred to those that said more than they should have.

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Slander

C. H. Spurgeon

"Show that man out!" we would say of a drunkard. Yet it is very questionable if his unmanly behavior will do us as much mischief as the talebearer's insinuating story.

"Call for a policeman!" we say if we see a thief at his business. Ought we to feel no indignation

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“Beware of the ...”

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Making oneself a listening post for complaining, gossip, or dissatisfaction can result in one’s having the same thoughts as the one that is floundering. The complaints and gossip can spread like an infectious disease. Soon the grumbler’s frustrations are shared feelings of their audiences. Here are some common scenarios that trap too many:

- ☞ “Well, maybe that person at work is lazy and making us do his work, like the other person said.”
- ☞ “Hmm, Sonya said that the person in the back of class is the one responsible for all the things missing in our class. Maybe he is a thief”
- ☞ “Oh, oh. She thinks her husband is cheating on her; perhaps, mine is doing the same thing.”
- ☞ “Things are not the same in church as they were. So-and-so says it’s because of what Deacon Jones is doing. Our problems in church are all his fault.”
- ☞ “My friend says So-and-so does look like he’s hiding something, and he is right; he does look suspicious. I don’t think I will trust him either.”

On and on the opinions and

observations of others can go into listening ears, and can do damage done by intentional or unintentional words. Most often, we do want to help, and that is why we listen. However, words said often turn into improper or unjustified judgments or actions by the listeners.

Here are several guidelines one can keep in mind when they are lending a listening ear:

- ☞ What the other person is saying is only his side of the story. If the listener wants to know the truth, he should hear the other person’s side of the situation. Suggesting to immediately get the other person’s view of what is being said, will often silence what is being said, as the talebearer may know what they are saying is more emotional than factual.

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Proverbs 18:13

“Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?”

John 7:51

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be estab-

lished.” Deut. 19:15

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”

I Timothy 5:19

“It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.” John 8:17

- ☞ Why are they telling me? Can I change the situation for them? Are they just gossiping, backbiting, complaining, or do they just want the situation of which they are speaking handled their way? Can what they are saying result in anything positive?

If it is detected that what is being said is for the wrong reasons, change the conversation or walk away from what is being said. Why would anyone want to participate in the other person’s sin?

“They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.”

Psalm 12:2

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.” Psalm 34:13

“Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.”

Psalm 120:2

- ☞ Is what is being said edifying? Can it be destructive to my ears, or will it reinforce the problem to them as they tell their problems and make both of us more miserable? Is what is being said going to

help or change anything, or is it just gossip?

“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips. Selah.” Psalm 140:3

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”

Proverbs 17:9

- ☞ If a good solution is given to solve the speaker’s dilemma that they are complaining about, will they follow the advice, or will they keep on grumbling to anyone that listens?

“Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.”

Pr. 23:9 Also: Pr. 9:8

- ☞ Why am I listening to them? Am I doing it to be a help, or do I just want to hear some dirt about someone else?
“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

- ☞ Does their voicing of their grievances bring confusion and division to others? If it does bring negative side effects to others, then their “beefs” are probably not of God.

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

I Corinthians 14:33

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“You cannot stop people's tongues, and therefore the best thing to do is to stop your own ears and never mind what is spoken.” — C. H. Spurgeon