

週一嗎哪 午間查經分享祈禱會

MONDAY MANNA
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GUARDING AGAINST WORKPLACE GOSSIP

By Rick Boxx

There is a disease afflicting the workplace that receives little attention, but it's devastating. This "disease" is gossip, the practice of repeating disparaging, demeaning, and often deceitful information about other people. It destroys relationships, damages employee morale, and can poison any workplace environment.

Gossip was a sport to Jennifer, one of my employees early in my business career. In meetings with her, when the names of other people came up, she would often mention something negative she claimed that person had said about me. Several of my relationships became strained due to her gossip. After she was terminated, I discovered many of her comments were lies intended to make herself look better.

I have long appreciated the wisdom of Ephesians 4:29, in which the apostle Paul offered this instruction: "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." Here are four biblically based insights from this passage and others for helping us guard against gossip:

The first insight is "Unwholesome Words." Some time ago I participated in a radio interview hosted by someone I had not known previously. Afterward, a friend asked about how my interview went. I began criticizing the radio host's style. Then God's Spirit convicted me that my comments were unwholesome and potentially hurtful, undermining the radio host's credibility. I vowed to guard my tongue in the future.

Stopping workplace gossip begins with us guarding our tongue from unwholesome words. As Proverbs 21:23 teaches, "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles."

The second insight is "Edification," using our words for building people up, rather than tearing them down with negative comments. Recently, a good friend asked me if I knew a Mr. Mills from my CPA days. I remembered Mr. Mills had hired me right out of college. What I recalled most was how he built up and affirmed me, even persuading me to enthusiastically do things in which I had no interest.

As Romans 15:2 teaches, "Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification."

If you desire to guard yourself against gossip, train yourself to build others up, not tear them down.

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The third insight is “Only Necessary Words.” Years ago, I served on the board of a new school. One day an upset parent called after hearing multiple rumors about the school’s leadership. We discovered the source of the rumors was a gossipy mother, exaggerating stories way out of proportion!

James 3:8 wisely observes that, “no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.” To guard against gossip and harmful words, speak only what’s necessary for the moment.

The final insight is “Grace.” The clerk ringing up our groceries was speaking sharp and offensive words to my wife, Kathy. When she pointed out the offense, Kathy was met with indifference, so she pressed the clerk to acknowledge the inappropriate behavior. Upon arriving home, however, Kathy said, “I need to go back to the store and apologize to that clerk.” She did return and brought grace into a strained situation.

As Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” Seasoning our speech with grace will prevent hurt feelings and guard against spreading gossip.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “gossip”? Can you give a recent example that you have heard?
2. Have you ever been the target or victim of someone else’s gossip? What was that experience like, and how did it affect you? How did you respond?
3. Can you think of a time when you engaged in gossip about another person, perhaps to “contribute” to a conversation with friends or coworkers? If so, afterward did you have any second thoughts about what you said – and why you said it?
4. Why do you think it is so tempting to spread or participate in gossip about other people? By comparison, how much effort does it require to take the opposite approach – to speak only words that edify, lift up, and enhance relationships? Explain your answer.

NOTE:

*If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 4:24, 10:19-21,32, 11:13, 12:18,23, 15:2,7,23,28; 16:21,23, 17:20, 18:6-8*

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