

How to Guard Against
the Defilement of
Listening
to an
Evil Report

(Original presentation is from
Basic Youth Conflicts Seminar)

A brother offended is
more unyielding than a
strong city, and quarreling
is like the bars of a castle.

Prov. 18:19

Important Questions:

- ◆ What causes conflicts in families, churches or organizations to flare out of control and split the entire group?
- ◆ What causes close friendships to be broken when neither party offended the other?
- ◆ Why are attempts to restore a fallen Christian brother or sister often met with defeat

A MAJOR CAUSE:
WRONG RESPONSES TO AN
EVIL REPORT

“DEFINITION:

An evil report involves distortion of facts, incomplete facts or false information. It is given with wrong motivations and causes the hearer to come to inaccurate conclusions and to respond with unscriptural “solutions”. Evil reports are so destructive that they can even destroy long-lasting, close friendships: Proverbs 16:28 28 A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.”

NOTE:

Wrong doing should never be covered over. It must be brought to the attention of those who are responsible and dealt with in a scriptural manner. This necessary process will be damaged by the defilement of an evil report

STAGES OF DEFILEMENT:

In the medical world, there are stages in the development of a disease. In the same way, there are stages of destruction to a spiritually healthy person:

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- ◆ Disease when the infection destroys vital life-supporting functions

Ignorance

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 2:11 “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
- ◆ Ignorance is not being aware of the destructive power of untrue or distorted words.

James 3:6 (NKJV) "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell."

Ignorance of how words destroy close friendships:

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.

Ignorance of how the unclean
defile the clean, rather than the
clean influencing the unclean

Ignorance of what constitutes an
evil report:

It is an unauthorized or distorted
or false report which influences us
to form an evil opinion about
another person.

Ignorance of how evil reports are given:
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Ignorance of who gives evil reports:
Giving bad reports is part of the
fallen nature of every person.

Whisperer

One who secretly or privately passes on evil reports to others Psalms 41:7 "All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt."

Gossip

One who magnifies and
sensationalizes rumors and
partial information.

Slanderer

One who seeks to destroy another's credibility or reputation with damaging facts, distortion of facts, or evil suspicions.

[See numbers 14:36]

Busybody

One who digs up evil reports and makes it his business to spread them by means of gossip, sander, or whispering. Such an action is as great a as murder or stealing. It is classified with these by God when He warns: 1 Peter 4:15 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.”

Ignorance of what motivates evil reports [See James 3:14-18]

- ◆ Bitterness: Reacting because of personal hurts
- ◆ Rebellion: Justifying an independent spirit
- ◆ Deception: Believing that evil reports are right to give
- ◆ Pride: Wanting to exalt self
- ◆ Guilt: Justifying past actions or attitudes
- ◆ Envy: Desiring what another has

Ignorance of how susceptible we
are to evil reports:

- ◆ We enjoy hearing them because they exalt us. They bring down or hurt those whom we dislike.

Ignorance of how satan uses evil reports:

- ◆ To discredit spiritual leadership
- ◆ To cause Christians to close their spirit toward each other
- ◆ To multiply conflicts and produce more ungodliness
- ◆ To prompt non-Christians to mock Christianity and reject Christ

EXPOSURE

Proverbs 27:12 "A prudent man foresees
evil and hides himself; The simple pass on
and are punished."

Exposure is entering into conversation
with a person who is a carrier of an evil
report

How does God want us
to respond?

- ◆ Psalms 101:5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure.
- ◆ Ephesians 5:10-12 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.
- ◆ Romans 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

We have protective physical defenses to warn us about physical contamination. We can smell it or see it or taste it. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of contamination until it is too late.

In the same way God gives us protective spiritual defenses to warn us about spiritual contamination. We can sense the promptings of God's Holy Spirit follow the warnings of God's Word and obey the wise counsel of our human authorities.

Sometimes, however, we are unaware of spiritual danger until it is too late.

How to detect a carrier of an evil report

- ◆ A carrier will usually test your spirit before giving you the evil report. Any evidence of a compatible spirit in you will encourage him to give you the report.
- ◆ A carrier will usually check your acceptance of his report before giving it to you. He may do this by asking for your opinion about the person or dropping a negative comment and observing your response to it.
- ◆ A carrier will often get you to ask for the evil report by creating curiosity for it. Some starters are: "Have you heard about [the person]?" "Wait till I tell you about [the person]!"
- ◆ A carrier may communicate an evil report by asking us for counsel or by sharing a concern for the person involved.
- ◆ A carrier may use evil reports to get you to admire him or her because of being on the inside and having access to privileged information.
- ◆ A carrier is usually one who evokes vivid details of evil and will even search them out. God condemns such "detectives of darkness" whose tongues are like sharp swords."

HOW TO DETECT
AN EVIL REPORT:

Five questions to ask before
listening to a carrier:

- ◆ What is your reason for telling me?
- ◆ Widening the circle of gossip only compounds the problem.
- ◆ Where did you get your information?
- ◆ Refusal to identify the source of information is a sure signal of an evil report.
- ◆ Have you gone to those directly involved?
- ◆ Spirituality is not measured by how well we expose an offender, but by how effectively we restore an offender. Galatians 6:1 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
- ◆ Have you personally checked out all the facts?
- ◆ Even "Facts" become distorted when not balanced with other facts or when given with negative motives.
- ◆ Can I quote you if I check this out?
- ◆ Those who give evil reports often claim that they are "misquoted." This is because their words and overriding impressions are reported.

Defilement

- ◆ Proverbs 26:22 “The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body. Defilement is receiving an evil report from another person and believing that it is true.
- ◆ In the same way that touching a diseased person will defile one’s hands, listening to an evil report will defile one’s mind. It is reality, which must be properly dealt with; Hebrews 12:15 “looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;”

Absalom

2 Samuel 15:1-7