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## Daily Devotional - The Danger of Idle Talk

MARCH 04TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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### Proverbs 12:13-22

Ask a group of people to define gossip, and most will mention something about spreading rumors about others. That is correct, but it's not the whole truth. Gossip includes any idle or malicious talk that harms someone else. In other words, damaging speech is a universal sin—one that we all are guilty of at some point in life.

For example, did you ever comment negatively on how a person was dressed? Or suggest to a friend that someone you both know is in the wrong job or involved in unsuitable hobbies? Or tell an acquaintance about another man or woman's personal life? Let me ask you a final question: Did you feel a check in your spirit while you were speaking? All of these can be examples of gossip—words that do damage and hurt others despite sounding innocent.

Idle comments are often delivered in a way that makes them seem unlike the traditional definition of gossip. People mask gossip in several ways, such as speaking in jest, offering others' personal details "as an example," and disguising the spread of information as a prayer request. Of course, not every tease or illustration is gossip. And the body of Christ is certainly called upon to pray for those facing hard times. Therefore, we must be able to distinguish between worthless chatter and wise speech.

What matters is the heart's motivation ([Ps. 19:14](#)). When the intention is to mar a reputation or create instant camaraderie with another person, lips move loosely—this often happens while discussing someone else's misfortune. But a desire to please God and

reflect His grace prompts us to speak only that which builds others up ([Eph. 4:29](#)).

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