

Gossip and slander, on: 2014/3/4 9:05

I want to speak to the general subject of gossip and slander. I think all reasonable Christian men and woman in all areas of Christendom would acknowledge that to gossip, backbite and slander is an offence to a holy God and violates his clearly written word.

However, there is a tactic that has been used by the enemy of our souls many times, and indeed he had the boldness to use it towards the Son of God Himself. It is the tactic of taking the word of God and using it to bring an accusation against a brother or sister in order to silence them when God is clearly bringing something to the light. The tactic is designed to destroy the person God is using to expose the darkness and to silence them and keep the issue in darkness, it is a particularly evil tactic.

It is a particularly effective tool when it is used in conservative circles who have a tendency towards legalism, but I want to give an example where it was used in a very Pentecostal church that I attended for almost 10 years which shall remain nameless, but needless to say it was a very large organization and nationally known.

In this church they had a very good rule, men ministered to men and women ministered to women. It was not hard and fast but it was a general rule that was, for the most part, followed. What was a hard and fast rule was that a man shall never minister to a woman in private. Not in a coffee shop or any place where it is just thee two of them and certainly never in either of their homes. I believe that to be a very good principle.

A woman of good standing came forward and shared with the elders that when she knocked on the door of a Christian sister, she saw through the glass, the pastor coming out of the woman's bedroom upstairs fixing himself and the woman followed quickly after doing the same. She was deeply disturbed. She told her husband and they approached the pastor and an excuse was made. Now at the very least, one of the golden rules of the church had been violated, but there were only denials. They then took another with them to him and that failing, they went to the elders who completely rejected the charges against the man who had promoted all of them to their positions.

The very next week came the first of many sermons against the wicked sin of gossip. First by the pastor and followed up by many of the elders. The woman who had brought the charge was almost crushed under the weight of the accusations she now faced and while she had kept the whole thing private, her name was now somehow out there as a gossip and a slanderer. You see how evil and wicked this was? What the Lord was determined to expose, the devil was determined to keep hid through the word of God and the feverish work of men trying to hold on to their reputations and their standing in the church and in the world of Christendom.

Fourteen months later, the pastor ran off with this woman leaving his wife of almost 40 years. It was revealed that the elders had not only covered up this situation, but that there had been many situations over a fourteen year period that had always been dismissed and never truly investigated.

We, at all times, must be aware of the schemes and tactics of the enemy who works under the shadow of darkness. He is determined to keep things hidden under the rock and the Lord tells us to bring all things to the light. Each of us must be on guard to make sure we are about the Lord's work, not the enemies. We must follow and pursue truth no matter where it takes us, we must fear God more than we fear man, this is truly the beginning of wisdom and light.....bro Frank

Re: Gossip and slander - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2014/3/4 9:32

amazing post!! thanks for sharing this truly it was a blessing to read.

rdg

Re: Gossip and slander, on: 2014/3/4 9:43

I have to say Frank that I am really struggling to understand the meaning of your post. Brother if I had come into the same situation as the sister did when she witnessed that which appeared to be evidence of sexual immorality I would have went before the Lord. I would have gone to the pastor in private and told him plainly what I had seen and warned him of the terrible day of the Lord.

In the end I would expect that the Lord Himself would have judged that situation and brought it to an end for His own names sake.

Anyone can become the exposition of others lives. It is the easiest thing in the world. If we all took that same position of believing we needed to expose the sin of others we would find that in the end we could destroy almost everyone.

I knew of a pastor who was setting up a young sister in the church to be his mistress, at the same time as his wife was dying of cancer. My friend took a liking to this young sister and she to him. Within a few days this pastor appeared at my friends house. He was invited in by my friend who was unaware of the reality of his life only to find himself looking at a handgun which was displayed in a very clever way to intimidate him. The next week the pastor was invited back to his house only this time I was there. I openly challenged him, rebuked him and warned him of the consequences of his actions. In the course of the next two weeks my wife was met by this same pastor on the street on no less than three occasions. She had never seen him before and didn't even know who he was.

When I came to prayer about this man the Lord weighed on me the necessity not to speak about this situation with anyone, but to leave the matter in His hands. So in obedience I would not even speak with my friend on the subject either and advised him to be of the same mind.

One night a few days after the Lord constrained me in the way I have said, I was pressed into prayer and found myself praying in such a way that my own prayers caused me to tremble with the fear of the Lord. That was at 01:00 Hrs. At 05:00 Hrs another friend who had no knowledge of any of these events was woken by the Lord. He found himself groaning before the Lord for this pastor and crying out for the Lord's mercy.

At 07:00 Hrs the pastor himself was driving on his way to a local shop to collect his Sunday morning newspaper. Unknown to myself he had been invited by the elders to preach at my own church that morning. His car was hit with such force that it was literally cut into two parts. The pastor found himself sitting in his front seat unharmed but bruised from the physical shock of the impact. Somewhat fearfully he arrived at the church to preach. I was the first person to greet him and I was shocked at his appearance. By this means he was humbled. A young sister was preserved and the Lord's name was lifted up.

Brethren the way to deal with unrighteousness is not to make a public display of it, but to go before the Lord with tears. This is especially true when accusing an elder of the church. Two or three witnesses does not mean one sister looking through a window.

Personally I do not hold to making a public display of anyone regardless of their sins. Let the Law do that which the Law is appointed to do. And let those who are not under the Law do that for which liberty they have been set free.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2014/3/4 10:05

Personally I do not hold to making a public display of anyone regardless of their sins. Let the Law do that which the Law is appointed to do. And let those who are not under the Law do that for which liberty they have been set free. --

so let me ask you if the pastor had been abusing the woman you believe she should just keep quiet about it? what if it had been a child should we look the other way and not bring the sin into the light? need some clarity on your post because it sounds like your approach is to just ignore the sin that others are in no matter who it hurts.

rdg

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 10:39

Quote:
-----so let me ask you if the pastor had been abusing the woman you believe she should just keep quiet about it? what if it had been a child should we look the other way and not bring the sin into the light? need some clarity on your post because its sounds like your approach is to just ignore the sin that others are in no matter who it hurts. rainydaygirl

The obvious answer to your question is to draw a distinction between sin and a criminal offence.

Sister I am a male. I hear about this subject of child abuse all the time. It is almost always presented in an accusatory sense. It is almost always presented by women and a few men seem to join in the accusations.

If a child has been abused then it is a criminal offence. If a man has a sexual relationship with a woman who is not claiming abuse then it is not a criminal offence in the USA where this account, which Frank has posted, is set. It is sin. So as I said Let the Law do that which the Law is appointed to do. And let those who are not under the Law do that for which liberty they have been set free.

I was sexually abused as a child and I care nothing for the false accusations which I read continuously by the heroes of imagined victims. Either we are in the mind of Christ or we are in some other mind. In the mind of Christ we have obedience to all authority. In the mind of Christ we have the comprehension that the Mercy of God triumphs over His Judgements. In subjection to all authorities we have criminal laws and consequences. In grace we have the blood of Christ and the coming Kingdom of God.

For those who are not able to make the distinction and at the same time recognise their responsibility both to the Law and to Christ then there is no helping it or them.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/3/4 11:10

Quote:
-----I have to say Frank that I am really struggling to understand the meaning of your post. Brother if I had come into the same situation as the sister did when she witnessed that which appeared to be evidence of sexual immorality I would have wept before the Lord. I would have gone to the pastor in private and told him plainly what I had seen and warned him of the terrible day of the Lord.

In the end I would expect that the Lord Himself would have judged that situation and brought it to an end for His own names sake.

Anyone can become the exposition of others lives. It is the easiest thing in the world. If we all took that same position of believing we needed to expose the sin of others we would find that in the end we could destroy almost everyone.

I agree with you brother in this regard. We need to have the fear of the Lord in speaking of any brother who seemingly has been caught in a sin. If we have joy in exposing brethren who have fallen in various ways especially those who are well-known ministers then we need to have a heart-check in our own walk with the Lord. I am very weary and slow to post strong accusations against elders publicly now until I feel it is the Lord wanting me to post it as an ensign and warning to all of us. Secondly and perhaps more importantly is to ensure that the information is 100% correct and not false charges.

Towards brother Frank's writing I also agree that we must not be scared ever to speak out against known sin especially in an elder. But perhaps how to do that properly is in question. I would feel to speak to other elders or mature believers in the body first would be the best route. Especially if it was a woman who saw the event instead of her going directly to the pastor by herself. I do believe there is a great sin of slander from God's people's lips to speak evil of all the faults of God's ministers and therefore the enemy is winning a victory were we are biting and devouring one another (Galatians 5:15). But as brother Frank said we should never confuse proper church discipline and bringing sin to light as slander. I believe it just needs to be done in the right way depending on the severity of sin.

Towards Bill Gothard, and news about his falling, I at first was very grieved and reluctant to post the news item. I do not agree with all the teachings of his ministry but did have respect for some things. I have heard recently from one elder brother that these allegations (some of them) could very well possibly be true and there is a seriousness here. I would pers

onally rather post the end result from the ministry and godly men who are weighing this situation. That is the one reason why I was reluctant and still am to a small measure to cast a stone and say that Bill Gothard IS guilty.

This also is the same for me about Yoggi Cho and his embesment of God's money. At first I was very weary to post anything but did feel God wanted me to as a warning and ensign to saints about the love of money.

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 11:12

I don't think men's laws deal with the defrauding of a member of the church by a minister. That is where ecclesiastical jurisdiction rather than civil jurisdiction comes into play.

Civil laws that were broken are another matter.

But, if a sister or sisters have been defrauded in the area of their affections and body by a minister, the Church has an obligation from the Lord to deal with it.

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 11:38

Andrew, I fear you may have mis-read what I wrote. I wrote that she and her husband privately approached the pastor in regard to this issue. He refused to acknowledge his sin. They then went again to him with another brother, in private, he again refused to acknowledge his sin. They finally went to the elders, again in private, they refused to accept what the lady had seen. Only after he ran off with the lady was it finally revealed that the elders had, over many years, had similar private reports made to them in regard to similar issues.

All along the people who had witnessed these issues were honorable and followed the word of God in their dealings with this man, it was he and the elders who publicly berated those who had made the charges, and they did this by preaching sermon after sermon about gossip and back biting. It was simply a technique to control and manipulate people.

I hope no one confuses by post with anything to do with Bill Gothard. I know nothing about this man or his ministry, never read anything about him or know any details of his teachings or indeed any accusations made against him. My post is about truth and the Biblical mandate. This applies to all men as it should do. Follow the Bible, it is a lamp unto our feet, follow it without fear or favor of men and it will guide us by the power of the Holy Spirit..... bro Frank

Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Mat 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Mat 18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 12:22

Quote:

-----Andrew, I fear you may have mis-read what I wrote. appolus

The balance Frank is as you say. I agree that your account is broader than my reply would indicate.

It is a serious thing when elders either do not know how to act on such private reports or else completely avoid them, especially when there are a number of them. As you said this kind of thing appears to be common. I expect that when any pastor who ends up doing what this particular pastor did, there will be some people in the church who in the end will acknowledge that they had concerns before hand. For me personally I believe in judgement here and now and if possible a judgement in keeping with the principle of whether a sin is an open sin, such as the man in 1 Corinthians chapter five, or a hidden sin which is seen through the glass of uncertainty.

I did think that you had posted in response to another post, but I accept that you didn't. Sorry for that brother.

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 12:41

No problems brother Andrew. I can also tell you that this man was restored to his wife and finally had victory over those issues, praise the Lord. He never pastored again and he developed cancer several years after he returned to his wife and then he died. The church was never the same and whittled down, changed its name and is but a shadow of its former self. This is surely a case where the cover up ended up being greater and more destructive to the Body, than the actual sin of infidelity was, since there was genuine reconciliation between the man and his wife to the glory of the Lord Jesus..
.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 13:05

I know of a man of God who was widely respected by many, an anointed teacher of God's Word and one person saw him going into a porno theatre. The brother confronted the teacher and the man of God was cut to the quick and admitted what he was there for. In this case only one brother saw him and although the man of God admitted it, the brother felt they should both go to the board. The administration of the International Bible school felt that the prudent action would be to dismiss him from teaching students as they wanted to stay far above reproach. The man of God was not dis-fellowshipped. He was restored several years later and became a pastor in the same city.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2014/3/4 15:03

hey armkelly

thanks for posting back to me. i too was abused when i was younger by someone who was given authority over me. later when i tried to tell others what happened the response was to pretend it never happened and to just forget about it. that kind of abuse and betrayal hurts(but then you understand that because you mentioned being abused yourself.) this is a topic i should just stay away from completely.

learned a lesson today
rdg

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 16:33

Quote:

-----I know of a man of God who was widely respected by many, an anointed teacher of God's Word and one person saw him going into a porno theatre. The brother confronted the teacher and the man of God was cut to the quick and admitted what he was there for. In this case only one brother saw him and although the man of God admitted it, the brother felt they should both go to the board. The administration of the International Bible school felt that the prudent action would be to dismiss him from teaching students as they wanted to stay far above reproach. The man of God was not dis-fellowshipped. He was restored several years later and became a pastor in the same city. just-in

I realise that this is not a competition of miserable stories but I wanted to share something which shows how just one witness is all that is sufficient for anything if a man is willing to plead guilty. The strange thing though is that people do not always plead guilty because they have in fact sinned at all with their bodies in that instance. Sometime people plead guilty because they have been sinned against by others and have been driven to physical pleasure against their own choosing.

I know a pastor who was severely abused by a family friend when he was a teenager. The predator was particularly perverse in that he made this friend of mine feel guilty by telling him always that he would be a parasite to others if their activities were disclosed. Ten years after these events my friend went to bible college. One day he went into a public toilet and had a sort of panic attack. The only witness to my friend going into the toilette was a policeman who was watching the toilet because it was being used by sexual predators. I was actually attacked in these same toilets myself just weeks before this event happened.

My friend was taken to the police station for questioning and he was in a state of utter turmoil because he realised that he was suspected of a crime which he himself had been a victim of ten years earlier. The police officer took his confusion to mean guilt. When he explained that he was at Bible College they cut him some slack and suggested that he might want to confess up front to loitering in a public place with intent to commit a sexual offence and then he would be cautioned and released and no one would know. Realising that such an investigation would involve his parents via the Bible College and that would more than likely mean having to explain why he was so long in the toilet he agreed to the caution. He was protecting his father and mother from the shame of their friend who had attacked him for years.

Twenty-four years later my friend was marched from his office by two female elders. Ordered to go to his home and was put under investigation. He was forbidden to speak with anyone in the church until the investigation had passed. The accusation against him was improper sexual conduct with a male member of the congregation. It was one accusation and no evidence whatsoever. My friend fell into a state of near suicidal depression. When I arrived at his house and began to talk about a toilet in Birmingham (the very same toilet he was falsely accused in relation to) he nearly fell off his chair. It was then that he shared his conviction in 1984. With that I wrote to the one elder in the church who carried more responsibility than anyone else. This was a medical doctor. He had been counselling this pastor for the previous six months or so and recording their sessions. My friend disclosed the terrible story of his teenage years in full detail. When the false accusation came from the man in the church this elder instead of exercising either medical discretion or spiritual discernment shared that the false accusation may have some basis in reality because.....and he told the story of my friend.

This friend was treated like a criminal. He was publicly pilloried by the elders. He was summarily dismissed. Treated with utter hostility and contempt and it very nearly cost him his life. The whole basis for this powerful response apart from the spiritual wickedness which was at work, was two sisters who felt they had a duty to destroy this sexual predator. In their investigation they uncovered the caution dated 1984 for a suspected sexual offence of intent. Their actions were truly wicked and they hated my friend with a hatred which was almost physical. The strange thing is however they did it with such sweetness and such authority as they laboured out of the very physiology of their bodies and minds. The other elders, including the Doctor stood back and watched. They could not intervene because they had proof as well. It was the same proof everyone else had. Yet it was no more than a man admitting to something to protect his parents because he knew that the shame they would feel if they knew how he had suffered because of their lack of discernment when they failed to realise their son was being raped on a regular basis by the man they trusted.

Were these sisters without proof? No they had proof. Though in the end it had nothing to do with the accusation. Were they emotionally informed by their own bodies? They most certainly were. Were they able to exercise political power due to their gender? Yes they were. All because they were female and not male they could do to this man what no man would have even considered to do. None of the elders and almost the whole church stood by because no one was able to say your gender does not make you an expert on abuse. Not all men are predators. But you say they had proof. So they did.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2014/3/4 17:03

frank i still think this post of yours is amazing and just wanted you to know it helped reading it over knowing that there are brothers out there that care. i do think we should always be careful with our words and what we say so as not to harm another with gossip

rdg

Re: , on: 2014/3/4 19:46

Yes indeed sister, just following hard after the Lord and living our lives according to His word and His abiding in us will keep us close to Him. God cares sister, the Lord cares and so many of His precious saints care. Indeed, we must never intentionally harm anyone either by our words or actions.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2014/3/5 7:58

frank thank you for your kind words. as i have prayed about your post and considered the other thread i find myself looking at my own attitude and my own thoughts in all of this. i want to be careful to not take sides in any of it, i just want to pray for all and heed what you shared here. God does have a way for us to deal with these things and that should be the only avenue we ever look to. i know it is so easy to become involved in gossip and slander without realizing that is what one is doing. so important to be in prayer

rdg

Re: , on: 2014/3/5 9:13

Hi RDG,

I have found that when something dramatic happens or is revealed there tends to be, broadly speaking, two camps. The one camp wants to burn the house down and often revels in the fact that someone or something is being destroyed and "piles on," desperately wanting to be part of the action. It is very ungodly.

The other camp reacts with the same hysteria, only they want nothing to do with any conflict at all and merely want to bury their heads in the sand and speak nothing of it. Both of these camps will attack each other, revealing that they are both indulging in ungodliness and often times, but not always, revealing that they have been abused or hurt in the past and this is a manifestation of their own undealt with hurt and pain. And both camps will consider themselves to be Godly and acting on behalf of God.

Who is the third camp? God's ministers. They react with wisdom and a level head. They go to the Lord and to the Word and they act very intentionally, ignoring the screams from the other two camps and incurring the wrath from the other two camps. Yet God's saints are lovers of truth and this is what they will follow, not their own emotions or the emotions of others, but the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Thank you Father in the name of Jesus for those who will follow you without the fear of the favor of man.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2014/3/5 9:41

Appolus, I appreciate your thread topic. I admit, I haven't heard no end of sermons about the evils of gossip, but rarely any admission that gossip may perhaps be the sad outcome of a sick system - where the people do not have any means for handling their anxieties and concerns. Perhaps there has been a habit of silencing the people, and a lack of good teaching on healthy, mature relationships. If people are silenced and their concerns are constantly ignored or disregarded, then they will turn to another ear, a third party, a "safe" person. It's not right, but let's admit, the burden of the sin does not fall only on "gossipers"!

Suppressing gossip is like giving Tylenol to a cancer patient. You merely suppress the symptoms, not bring healing.

A thought:

We all know the Matt. 18 passage about how to deal with a brother caught in sin. But I suspect fewer of us know the context of Matt. 18. Why not check it out? What kind of problem is Jesus very concerned about? What's the BIG sin problem? (Paul and others address it too)

Hint: It's a sin that typically falls under the radar! And if we'd take THIS sin seriously enough, God's flock could be spared of a lot of troublesome sins down the road - like gossip and slander.

Blessed are the peacemakers.... (genuine peace, that is)

Diane

Re: Gossip and slander - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2014/3/5 9:47

Very good article, Frank.

This kind of thing is the norm, unfortunately. The people that want to confront error Biblically will be the ones who will soon become the victims of slander, called troublemakers, be held in suspicion, be called upon to retract, etc. But life will prove you right and never an acknowledgement of it will be forthcoming - too humiliating.

I just read something the other day - cannot for the life of me remember where - where a popular preacher had among his staff two people get 'involved'. It was dealt with privately, quietly, not publicly at all. In a matter of a few years 17 more incidents like this occurred in this ministry. The article went on to say how this sin and the perpetrators should have been exposed publicly. Doing so would have put some holy fear in others who may have been tempted now or in the future.

So these elders were a party to this sin by covering up, right? Sounds like the government...