



GRACIOUS SPEECH

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Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:6)

Some time after this, King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king. David said, "I am going to show loyalty to Hanun just as his father, Nahash, was always loyal to me." So David sent ambassadors to express sympathy to Hanun about his father's death.

But when David's ambassadors arrived in the land of Ammon, the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, their master, "Do you really think these men are coming here to honor your father? No! David has sent them to spy out the city so they can come in and conquer it!" So Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them back to David in shame.

When David heard what had happened, he sent messengers to tell the men, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out, and then come back." For they felt deep shame because of their appearance.

When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob. When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them. The Ammonite troops came out and drew up their battle lines at the entrance of the city gate, while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah positioned themselves to fight in the open fields.

When Joab saw that he would have to fight on both the front and the rear, he chose some of Israel's elite troops and placed them under his personal command to fight the Arameans in the fields. He left the rest of the army under the command of his brother Abishai, who was to attack the Ammonites. "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then come over and help me," Joab told his brother. "And if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. May the Lord's will be done."

When Joab and his troops attacked, the Arameans began to run away. And when the Ammonites saw the Arameans running, they ran from Abishai and retreated into the city. After the battle was over, Joab returned to Jerusalem.

The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel. So when they regrouped, they were joined by

additional Aramean troops summoned by Hadadezer from the other side of the Euphrates River. These troops arrived at Helam under the command of Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer's forces.

When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to Helam. The Arameans positioned themselves in battle formation and fought against David. But again the Arameans fled from the Israelites. This time David's forces killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, including Shobach, the commander of their army. When all the kings allied with Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they surrendered to Israel and became their subjects. After that, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites. (2 Samuel 10:1-19)

SOURCES OF TRUTH

1. World
2. Self
3. God (Scripture)

So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord. He failed to obey the Lord's command, and he even consulted a medium instead of asking the Lord for guidance. So the Lord killed him and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse. (1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

Listening to gossip spreads the 'virus of sin'

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. (Proverbs 16:28)

Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler. (Proverbs 20:19)

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! (Psalm 141:3)

Set guards on:

1. Social media—what you listen to and what you watch
2. Mouth—what you speak or repeat
3. Heart—guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)

You can tell a lot about a person's walk with God by listening to their conversations!

SCRIPTURE AS THE SOURCE OF TRUTH

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. (Psalm 19:7)

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

While taking the message of Jesus to the towns of his world, Paul visited Berea and went to the synagogue there. The people's dual response is perfect:

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (Acts 17:11)

DEALING WITH FALSEHOODS

An old Irish proverb claims 'he who gossips with you will gossip about you!'

Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down. (Proverbs 26:20)

Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness. (Exodus 23:1)

Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues. (Proverbs 10:19)

1. Change the subject. Distract people from gossiping by bringing up another subject in the conversation. Something that's interesting—yet positive—to talk about can redirect people's focus away from gossip, while also sending them a clear signal that you don't want to take part. In Ephesians 4:29, the Bible urges: '*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*' If a conversation isn't heading in a helpful direction, choose to be the one who changes its course by changing the subject.

2. Say something positive about the person who's the target of gossip. No matter how negative a gossipy story about a person may be, there are positive qualities to that person since he or she is made in God's image.

'...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.' (Philippians 4:8)

3. Confront gossip politely yet firmly. Stand up to people who are gossiping by saying that you don't want to know about the story they're trying to tell you. Don't hesitate to call gossip what it is. You could say something like: 'That sounds like gossip to me, so I don't really want to hear any more. Let's just drop it.' That isn't too harsh; it's simply holding others accountable for their choice of words. Jesus reveals in Matthew 12:36-37 that '*...on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*' God places a high value on keeping people accountable for their words.

4. Turn gossip into prayers. Whenever you hear gossip, pray for the people whom the gossip targets. Talk with God—not other people!—about the negative stories you've heard through gossip, asking Him to intervene in each situation to help each person involved if there's actually any truth to the stories. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help people overcome the attacks to their reputations. You can pray these words from Isaiah 54:17 over them: '*no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.*' View every time you encounter gossip as an opportunity to bless the people involved by praying for them.

Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. (Romans 1:29-32)

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. (Ephesians 4:21-29)