



Students that I love, I am so happy to see you today. If you are new in the room, the biggest of welcomes to you! Please let me have the privilege of meeting you after our service.

[Leader note: Come up with a pretend piece of gossip about another small group leader or staff member—someone who is a good sport. Ask the small group leader or staff member if it's ok that you tell this fake piece of gossip as an opening illustration. Say something like this:

Have you guys heard the news? I don't know if I am supposed to tell you this and honestly, I've just heard it through the grapevine, but it's just such big news that I can't keep it in. I need to process this out loud. Do you promise not to tell anyone what I'm about to tell you? She really needs prayer and this is like a prayer group, right? So, I can tell you?

I just heard that Sally Smith Small Group Leader and her husband have been fighting recently about a lot of things and he's been sleeping on the couch. Her kids have seemed pretty down lately, and I bet that's why! I'm not sure exactly what's causing their problems, but I know Sally has been pretty stressed financially because they have been wanting to go on a big Disney vacation as a family. So, they both have been working long hours. And I don't know, maybe the pressure just got to them. Oh! Or maybe he met somebody new at work and is cheating on her and that's why I heard she might be stepping down from small group leading. You know, I never really liked her husband anyway.

Whoah, Whoah Whoah!!!! Before you start texting Sally Smith Small Group Leader, I want you to know that EVERYTHING I just told you was a lie. Every bit of it. None of it was true. And don't worry, I asked Sally and her husband if it was ok that I used this illustration, and they were happy to play along.]

Did you see what I did there?

I just heard...

I bet that's why...

I'm not sure exactly...

Maybe...
I heard she...
You know, I never really...

I gossiped. I talked about someone who wasn't here to clarify. I was careful and secretive so she wouldn't find out. I didn't have my facts straight before I shared. I shared without asking. I made assumptions about a person. I made judgments based on things I was guessing were true or that I heard. I was nosey.

And do you know what? If that were a real situation, I would have lost some really great friends and an A+ small group leader today even if everything I assumed was true.

[Leader note: Tell a true story about a time that you gossiped about someone or that you were gossiped about and the aftermath.]

Today, we are going to be studying the book of Proverbs again as we are trying to figure out how to get along with people! It's harder than it sounds to live at peace with those around us. We are fickle humans who are easily offended, nosey, quick to judge, slow to offer the benefit of the doubt, quick to speak, and generally bad at first in handling complex relational dynamics.

We need wisdom. We need God's help to get along. It's not simply because we want to be a good person or feel a sense of tranquility in our hearts instead of the dread or anxiety that can come upon us because of social situations. We need wisdom to get along because we want to love and honor God and bring Him glory by truly loving others. Remember Jesus' greatest commandment was "love the Lord your God and love your neighbor." We can't do that if we are gossiping.

[Pray.] So God, speak to us today through your words in the book of Proverbs. Help us to focus on you and dislodge the twisted fixation we have with knowing all the hot gossip. In Jesus' name, amen.

Let's look at a bunch of Proverbs that give us some insight on gossip. God is going to help us get along, y'all!!! There is hope. We are going to be teachable people today and soak in what the Holy Spirit is about to speak to us.

Proverbs 11:13 (NLT)

“A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.”

Proverbs 16:28 (NLT)

“A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.”

Proverbs 18:8 (NLT)

“Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one’s heart.”

Proverbs 20:19 (NLT)

“Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one’s heart.”

Proverbs 10:18 (NLT)

“Hiding hatred makes you a liar; slandering others makes you a fool.”

Proverbs 26:20-22 (NLT)

“Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops. A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood. Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one’s heart.”

Proverbs 18:6-7 (NLT)

“Fools’ words get them into constant quarrels; they are asking for a beating. The mouths of fools are their ruin; they trap themselves with their lips.”

Proverbs 11:9 (NLT)

“With their words, the godless destroy their friends, but knowledge will rescue the righteous.”

You guys, magazines are still a thing! Considering how every scrap of information you could ever want to find out about celebrities is online, isn't it amazing how when you go into Walmart, or Target, or the grocery store and your eyes are drawn to the magazines? Why do we do this? Why do we love seeing this or that gossip about people we don't know, have never heard of, or care about? How do you think those human beings feel about being put on magazines for the whole country to see with stories about them that aren't true? Why do you think so many celebrities end up like Brittany Spears or Amanda Bynes or Lindsey Lohan or Matthew Perry from

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