

Dear parents,

We've wrapped up our small group series on building community through healthy friendships. This final lesson focused on the battle against gossip.

It takes a lot of effort to build a strong friendship, but just a few words of gossip can destroy that relationship. A healthy friendship is built on trust, but gossip undermines that trust and can cause a friendship to crumble. Gossip divides friends and hurts the growth of a deep, solid friendship. And here's an unfortunate truth: Anyone who shares gossip *with* you may also be sharing gossip *about* you.

Drawing on biblical wisdom from Proverbs and some of Paul's writings in the New Testament, we encouraged our teenagers to examine the appeal and the dangers of gossip. They discussed ways to respond if a friend tries to share gossip, and they talked about some practical steps they can take when tempted to start or spread gossip to others.

I'd encourage you to take a few minutes this week to talk with your teenager about the impact and temptation of gossip. Here are a few questions you could incorporate into your conversation:

- How do you define "gossip"? When do you know you've crossed the line from simply talking about a friend's situation into gossip?
- How have you encouraged a friend who's been hurt by gossip?
- Which is the biggest struggle for you: starting new gossip about people, listening to other people's gossip, or passing along gossip you've heard? Why?

Thanks for your prayers and support for our small group ministry. I pray you have a blessed week!

COMMUNITY Sermon Series
Week 3: Stop Gossiping, Start Gospelling (pastor Joo)

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 25:9-10 (NLT)

⁹When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret. ¹⁰Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation.

PROVERBS 25:23 (NLT)

As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger!

PROVERBS 26:20 (NLT)

Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.

ROMANS 1:28-30 (NLT)

²⁸Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.

²⁹Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

³⁰They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:19-21 (NLT)

¹⁹Perhaps you think we're saying these things just to defend ourselves. No, we tell you this as Christ's servants, and with God as our witness.

Everything we do, dear friends, is to strengthen you. ²⁰For I am afraid that when I come I won't like what I find, and you won't like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorderly behavior. ²¹Yes, I am afraid that when I

come again, God will humble me in your presence. And I will be grieved because many of you have not given up your old sins. You have not repented of your impurity, sexual immorality, and eagerness for lustful pleasure.

HOW TO RUIN A GREAT FRIENDSHIP

1. Gossip tempts

2. Gossip spreads

3. Gossip destroys

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends (Proverbs 16:28 NLT).