

**How to
Guard Against
Defilement
that Comes from
Listening to an
Evil Report**

THE PROBLEM

- **What causes conflicts in families, churches or organizations to flare out of control and split the entire group?**
- **What causes close friendships to be broken when neither party offended the other?**
- **Why are attempts to restore a fallen Christian brother or sister often met with defeat?**

A MAJOR CAUSE: WRONG RESPONSES TO AN EVIL REPORT

DEFINITION:

An evil report involves distortion of facts, incomplete facts or false information. It is given with wrong motivations and causes the hearer to come to inaccurate conclusions and to respond with unscriptural "solutions".

- Evil reports are so destructive that they can even destroy long-lasting, close friendships; "A *whisperer separateth chief friends.*" Proverbs 16:28
- Wrong doing should *never* be covered over. It must be brought to the attention of those who are responsible and dealt with in a Scriptural manner. This necessary process will be damaged by the defilement of an evil report.

STAGES OF DEFILEMENT

In the medical world, there are stages in the development of a disease. In the same way there are stages of destruction to a spiritually healthy person:

1. **IGNORANCE** of "preventive" measures to avoid contamination;
↓
2. **EXPOSURE** to one who is already "infected";
↓
3. **CONTAMINATION** (defilement) by allowing the "germs" to enter our system;
↓
4. **INFECTION** as the "germs" overcome our normal defenses;
↓
5. **DISEASE** when the infection destroys vital life-supporting functions.

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE STAGES OF DEFILEMENT

1. IGNORANCE

Satan will gain an advantage over us if we are ignorant of his devices.

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

2 Corinthians 2:11.

<p>IGNORANCE IS NOT BEING AWARE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF UNTRUE OR DISTORTED WORDS</p>
--

"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity...it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."..."But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." James 3:6 & Matt. 15:18.

A. IGNORANCE OF HOW WORDS DESTROY CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS:

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" Prov. 17:9.

B. IGNORANCE OF HOW THE UNCLEAN DEFILE THE CLEAN, RATHER THAN THE CLEAN INFLUENCING THE UNCLEAN.

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." Haggai 2:11-14.

C. IGNORANCE OF WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EVIL REPORT.

- It is an unauthorized, distorted, or false report which influences us to form an evil opinion about another person or ministry.


D. Ignorance of how evil reports are given.


- Evil reports are communicated by words, facial expressions, gestures, and tonal patterns. They can be subtle or obvious, quiet or angry, sweet or bitter.


E. IGNORANCE OF WHO GIVES EVIL REPORTS.


- Giving bad reports is part of the fallen nature of every person.

DEFINITIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE IGNORANT


 **WHISPERER:** One who secretly or privately passes on evil reports to others. *"All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt"* Psalm 41:7.

 **GOSSIP:** One who magnifies and sensationalizes rumors and partial information. *"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly"* Prov. 26:22.


 **SLANDERER:** One who seeks to destroy another's credibility or reputation with damaging facts, distortions of facts, or evil suspicions. *"And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land"* Num.14:36.

 **BUSY-BODY:** One who digs up evil reports and makes it his or her business to spread them by means of gossip, slander, or whispering. Such an action is as a great a sin as murder or stealing. It is classified with these by God when He warns: *"Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters"*

1 Peter 4:15.

 **"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the LORD."**, Lev. 19:16.

F. IGNORANCE OF WHAT MOTIVATES EVIL REPORTS.

 *"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*, James 3:14-18 .

MOTIVATIONS

Bitterness: Reacting because of personal hurts. *"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled"* Heb. 12:15.


Rebellion: Justifying an independent spirit. *"For he addeth rebellion unto his sin"* Job 34:37.

Deception: Believing that evil reports are right to give. *"Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully."* Psalm 52:2

Pride: Wanting to exalt self over others. *"For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak."* Psalm 59:12.

Guilt: Justifying past actions or attitudes. *"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD"*
Prov. 17:15.

Envy: Desiring what another has. *"Thou shalt not covet" ... "Take heed, and beware of covetousness"* Exodus 20:17 & Luke 12:15.

 *"Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man"* Mark 7:11-23.

G. IGNORANCE OF HOW SUSCEPTIBLE WE ARE TO EVIL REPORTS

- We enjoy hearing them because they exalt us. They bring down or hurt those whom we dislike.

H. IGNORANCE OF HOW SATAN USES EVIL REPORTS.

- to discredit spiritual leadership
- to cause Christians to close their spirit toward one another
- to multiply conflicts and produce more ungodliness
- to prompt non-Christians and to mock Christianity and reject Jesus Christ


2. EXPOSURE

"A prudent man forseeth evil; and hideth himself, but the simple pass on are punished", Prov. 27:12.


EXPOSURE IS ENTERING INTO CONVERSATION WITH A PERSON WHO
IS A CARRIER OF AN EVIL REPORT

A. HOW DOES GOD WANT US TO RESPOND?

 *"Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off"* Psalm 101:5.


 *"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"*


Ephes. 5:10-12.

 *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."* Rom. 16:17.

- We have protective physical defenses to warn us about physical contamination. We can smell it, see it, or taste it. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of contamination until it is too late.
- In the same way God gives us protective spiritual defenses to warn us about spiritual contamination. We can sense the promptings of God's Holy Spirit, follow the warnings found in God's Word and obey the wise counsel of our human authorities. Sometimes, however, we are unaware of spiritual danger until it is too late.

B. HOW TO DETECT A CARRIER OF AN EVIL REPORT.

 A carrier will usually test your spirit before giving you the evil report. Any evidence of a compatible spirit in you will encourage him to give you the report.

 A carrier will usually check your acceptance of his or her report before giving it to you. He or she may do this by asking for your opinion about the person or dropping a negative comment and observing your response to it.

- ☞ A carrier will often get you to ask for the evil report by creating a curiosity for it. Some starters are: "Have you heard about (*the person*)?" or "Wait till I tell you about (*the person*)!"
- ☞ A carrier may communicate an evil report by asking for counsel or by sharing a concern for the person involved.
- ☞ A carrier may use evil reports to get you to admire him or her because of being on the inside and having access to privileged information.
- ☞ A carrier is usually one who evokes vivid details of evil and will even search them out. God condemns such "detectives of darkness" whose tongues are like sharp swords.

C. HOW TO DETECT AN EVIL REPORT

Five questions to ask before listening to an evil report	
•①	<p>"What is your reason for telling me?" Widening the circle of gossip only compounds the problem.</p>
•②	<p>"Where did you get your information?" Refusal to identify the source of information is a sure signal of an evil report.</p>
•③	<p>"Have you gone to those directly involved?" Spirituality is not measured by how well we expose an offender, but by how effectively we restore an offender. <i>"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."</i> Gal. 6:1</p>
•④	<p>"Have you personally checked out all the facts?" Even "facts" become distorted when not balanced with other facts or when given with negative motives.</p>
•⑤	<p>"May I quote you if I check this out?" Those who give evil reports often claim that they are "misquoted." This is because their words and overriding impressions are reported.</p>

3. CONTAMINATION-DEFILEMENT

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" Prov. 18:8 & 26:22.

**DEFILEMENT IS RECEIVING AN EVIL REPORT FROM ANOTHER PERSON
AND BELIEVING THAT IT IS TRUE**

In the same way that touching a diseased person will defile one's hands, listening to an evil report will defile one's mind. It is a reality which must be properly dealt with: *"lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled"* Heb. 12:15.

A CLASSIC ILLUSTRATION OF MANY LISTENING TO AN EVIL REPORT...

We can see in 2 Samuel 15 how Absalom used an innocent sounding evil report to steal the hearts of almost an entire nation and lead it in revolt against his own father, King David. The report emphasized his "concern" for suffering people, his "deep desire" that justice be done and his "ability" to be a better administrator than his father. Actually, Absalom was bitter because his father did not bring judgment to Absalom's half-brother for immorality, so he took matters into his own hands and was rejected for it.

 2 SAMUEL 15: 1-3 

"And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him¹...And Absalom rose up early², and stood beside the way of the gate³: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment⁴, then Absalom called unto him⁵, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel....And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right⁶; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee⁷....Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land⁸, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me⁹, and I would do him justice!....And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him¹⁰..."so Absalom stole the hearts¹¹ of the men of Israel."

1. He gathered and organized a group that would be loyal to him, rather than to the one whom he served.
2. He was energetic and disciplined.
3. He made himself available to the people.
4. He sought out those who had grievances.
5. He had a personal interest in people.

6. He took up the offenses of those who had been hurt.
7. He alienated people from their authority by giving an evil report about his leadership.
8. He offered to be the representative to make sure things were done right.
9. He would use his new position to increase his loyal following.
10. He desired acceptance and recognition as well as authority.
11. He carried out a tragic take-over of the nation with the help of those who were defiled and infected with an evil report.

4. INFECTION

"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going...As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife"

Prov. 14:15 & 26:21.

**INFECTION IS RESPONDING TO AN EVIL REPORT WITH HUMAN REASONINGS
AND EMOTIONS RATHER THAN WITH SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING AND
GENUINE LOVE**

"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips" Prov. 17:4.

- If the defilement of an evil report is not cleansed, wrong attitudes, opinions, conclusions, and actions will follow- even toward very close friends. *"A whisperer separateth chief friends"* Prov. 16:28.

SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

- BELIEVING THE EVIL REPORT IS TRUE.**
- FORMING NEGATIVE OPINIONS BASED ON THE REPORT.**
- FOCUSING ON NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PERSON INVOLVED.**
- INTERPRETING THE PERSON'S WORDS AND ACTIONS AS "SUPPORTING EVIDENCE."**
- JUDGING MOTIVES ON THE BASIS OF THE EVIL REPORT.**
- BACKING AWAY FROM THE PERSON IN YOUR SPIRIT.**
- TELLING THE EVIL REPORT TO OTHERS.**

- Anytime you are in doubt about "information" given to you through the words or actions of another, make this simple test above, checking those which apply. Copy this checklist and keep it as a handy reference. Having used it for a while, you will find you do not need to refer to this written list, as it will become an integral part of your thought process whenever someone speaks to you about another person or situation.

5. DISEASE

"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips" Prov. 17:4.

**DISEASE IS BEING MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY CONTROLLED
BY THE EVIL REPORT AND BY THE DESTRUCTIVE SPIRIT OF
THE ONE WHO GAVE IT TO US**

"He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him, when he speaketh fair, believe him not: for their are seven abominations in his heart....Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people" Prov. 26:24-25 & Lev. 19:16.

- A diseased Christian has grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit by taking up the offenses of others, making them his own, and adding to them.

SYMPTOMS OF DISEASE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	DEVELOPING BITTERNESS AND/OR REBELLION, EVEN THOUGH THE PERSON INVOLVED DID NOT DIRECTLY OFFEND US.
<input type="checkbox"/>	SETTING OURSELVES UP AS THE JUDGE IN MATTERS WHICH ARE GOD'S RESPONSIBILITY, AND RECRUITING OTHERS TO "OUR SIDE".
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEARCHING OUT EVIL REPORTS AND USING THEM TO GIVE THE WORST POSSIBLE IMPRESSION: <i>"An ungodly man diggeth up evil and in his lips there is as a burning fire.</i> Prov. 16:27.
<input type="checkbox"/>	BELIEVING THAT SUCH ACTIONS ARE ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHING GOD'S WILL RATHER THAN REALIZING THAT WE GIVE NON-CHRISTIANS OCCASION TO BLASPHEME GOD'S NAME BECAUSE OF OUR LACK OF GENUINE LOVE: <i>"I speak to your shame..brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbleivers: now therefore there is utterly a fault among you...ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren"</i> <div style="text-align: right;">1 Cor. 6:5-8.</div>

- Often we do not act on information when we should do so because the defilement or infection hinders God's grace in us (see Heb. 12:15).

6. HOW DO WE CLEANSE OUR MIND FROM AN EVIL REPORT ?

ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE A CHRISTIAN WHO HAS BEEN OVERTAKEN IN A FAULT WILL USUALLY FAIL UNLESS THE DEFILEMENT OF LISTENING TO EVIL REPORTS IS FIRST *CLEANSED* AND THEN *REPLACED* WITH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST'S LOVE, HUMILITY, AND FORGIVENESS.

- ↪ ASK GOD TO CLEANSE YOUR MIND FROM THE DEFILEMENT OF AN EVIL REPORT.
- ↪ PRAY FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU GENUINE LOVE FOR EACH ONE INVOLVED IN THE EVIL REPORT.
- ↪ CLEANSE YOUR MIND WITH APPROPRIATE SCRIPTURES:

HAVE I ACCEPTED THE EVIL REPORT AS TRUE ?

"The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going... Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.." Prov. 14:15 & Psalms 19:13.

(presumptuousness means to take for granted and assume to be true in the absence of proof to the contrary.)

HAS THE EVIL REPORT AFFECTED HOW I FEEL TOWARD THE PERSON INVOLVED ?

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit... for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things... Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins... Love..thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity" Prov. 15:4; Rom. 2:1; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 Cor. 13:5-6.

DO I HAVE AN URGE TO TELL SOMEONE ELSE THE EVIL REPORT ?

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearer... A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter... He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, but he that repeateth a matter separateth very [close] friends" Eph. 4:29; Prov. 11:13; Prov. 17:9.

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE CLEANSED YOUR HEART WHEN:

- YOU LOSE YOUR URGE TO TELL SOMEONE ELSE THE EVIL REPORT.**
- YOU GRIEVE OVER THE FACT THAT A REPORT WAS GIVEN.**
- YOU HAVE GENUINE LOVE TOWARD THE PERSON INVOLVED IN THE REPORT.**
- YOU ARE PROMPT TO EXAMINE YOUR OWN LIFE FOR FAILURES.**

↩ **ACT ON WHAT YOU HEARD. IS GOD DIRECTING YOU?**

IS GOD DIRECTING YOU TO CONTACT THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU THE EVIL REPORT ?

- to ask the 5 questions which identify an evil report? (see page 6)
- to emphasize the importance of speaking the truth in love?

(see John 17:20-26 & Phil. 2:1-4)

IS GOD DIRECTING YOU TO CONTACT THE PERSON INVOLVED IN THE SITUATION ?

- in order to check out the facts and help *restore* in the spirit of meekness. (see Matt. 18:15-18 & Gal. 6:1)

IS GOD DIRECTING YOU TO CONTACT THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SITUATION ?

- Once the Elders of the church are informed, the responsibility rests with them. (see Matt. 18:15-17)