

GOSSIPING AND BACKBITING

1. WHAT does the ninth commandment forbid?

“Thou shalt not bear *false witness* against thy neighbor.” **Exodus 20:16.**

NOTE — The evident object of this commandment is to guard the rights, interests, and reputation of our neighbor, by guarding our conversation, and confining our words to that which is strictly true.

2. What instruction did John the Baptist give the soldiers who asked of him advice regarding the way of life?

“And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, *neither accuse any falsely*; and be content with your wages.” **Luke 3:14.**

3. What is one test of a perfect man?

“If any man *offend not in word*, the same is a *perfect man*, and able also to bridle the whole body.” **James 3:2.**

4. How did Christ teach the importance of guarding our speech?

“But I say unto you, That *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned.” **Matthew 12:36, 37.**

5. To whom are our words all known?

“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it *altogether*.” **Psalms 139:4.**

6. Of what are one's words an index?

“Out of the abundance of *the heart* the mouth speaketh.” **Matthew 12:34.**

7. What conduct is condemned by the Scriptures?

“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.” **Leviticus 19:16.**

8. To what are the words of a talebearer compared?

“The words of a talebearer are *as wounds*.” **Proverbs 26:22.**

9. What is their effect?

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but *he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.*” **Proverbs 17:9.**

10. What would follow if there were no talebearers?

“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so *where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.*” **Proverbs 26:20.**

11. Among other things, what did Paul fear he would find in the Corinthian church?

“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, *backbitings*, whisperings, swellings, tumults.” **2Corinthians 12:20.**

12. What result follows backbiting and like evils?

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But *if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*” **Galatians 5:14, 15.**

13. How may a backbiting tongue be rebuked?

“The north wind driveth away rain: so *doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*” **Proverbs 25:23.**

14. To whom is the promise made of abiding in the tabernacle of the Lord, and dwelling in His holy hill?

“He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. *He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.*” **Psalms 15:2, 3.**

NOTE — “Never carry a sword in your tongue to wound the reputation of any man,” says Kinkle. Noah Webster laid down this rule: “We should say nothing of a person in his absence that we should be unwilling to say if he were present.” How few govern their conversation according to this rule! See **Proverbs 31:10, 26.**

15. What caution is given in regard to receiving an accusation against an elder?

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, *but before two or three witnesses.*” **1 Timothy 5:19.**

NOTE — “He that lends an easy and credulous ear to calumny is either a man of very mean morals, or has no more sense of understanding than a child.” *Menander.*

16. Can man, unrenewed by grace, control his tongue?

“For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: *but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*” **James 3:7, 8.**

17. As a guard against the misuse of the power of speech, therefore, for what should we pray?

“Set a *watch*, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” **Psalm 141:3.**

18. What vow did David take against offenses of the tongue?

“I said, *I will take heed to my ways*, that I sin not with my tongue: *I will keep my mouth with a bridle*, while the wicked is before me.” **Psalm 39:1.**

19. What is a sure cure for backbiting?

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” **Matthew 22:39.** “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” **Matthew 7:12.** “Speak evil of no man.” **Titus 3:2.** See also **James 4:11.**

20. What are those words like which are fitly spoken?

“A word fitly spoken is *like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*” **Proverbs 25:11.**

“KEEP a watch on your words, my darlings,
For words are wonderful things:
They are sweet like bees’ fresh honey;
Like the bees they have terrible stings;
They can bless like the warm, glad sunshine,
And brighten a lonely life;
They can cut in the strife of anger,
Like an open, two-edged knife.”