

THE OLD PATHS

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The Sin Of Gossiping

Joel Raulerson

Have you ever thought your gossip was harmless? God says He absolutely despises gossip. Notice what the Bible says about gossip in Proverbs 6. Proverbs 6:16-19 says, *“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”*

Five of the seven things that God says He hates in Proverbs 6:16-19 could be associated with people who choose to gossip. They enjoy spreading lies and gossip. Even though we know that sometimes gossip is true, just because the gossip is true, it does not make it godly. Gossips work to sow discord among the brethren. Gossips devise wicked plans to discredit and tear down others. Gossips are always looking for more gossip and are running to find out more evil to spread. Gossips cannot be trusted because they live to spread gossip and lies.

Gossips are worse than thieves because they steal another person’s dignity, honest reputation, and credibility. Once someone’s name has been drug through the mud in such a manner, it is almost impossible to restore it. We can see this in the political spectrum where politicians work to spread lies against their opponents. It could take years to disprove the lies spoken against them and there will still be lots of folks that choose to believe the lies rather than the truth.

Christians are told to not associate with gossips. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 20:19: *“Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler.”* Much of the gossip men hear today wouldn’t exist if we didn’t spend time perpetuating it. When we choose to listen to gossip, we are actually taking part in the gossip.

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Proverbs 26:20 tells us, *“For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.”*

How can we tell if we are gossiping? Ephesians 4:29 tells us, *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”* Stop and think before you speak. Is what you’re about to tell someone something that can edify or build up? Is the story you’re about to tell fit with the occasion, or are you just wanting to tear someone down? There is no reason for corrupt talk to come out of our mouths. If we let gossip become a part of our lives, we can destroy the lives of our brethren rather than build them up. The old adage is true, *“When your feet slip you can recover your balance, when your tongue slips you cannot recover your words.”* Those who partake in gossip are not of God and as James 1:26 says, *“If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person’s religion is worthless.”*

Can Women Lust?

Joel Raulerson

There is a school of thought that I hear every so often from Christians. Some express a belief that, “Women cannot lust or understand what lust is.” I see some twist passages like Matthew 5:26-27, where Jesus says, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that **everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent** has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Some will read this passage and ask why it doesn’t mention women lusting after men? The conclusion I have heard from some is that women cannot lust. Some have attempted to take the examples of David and Job struggling with the sin of lust and claim that we don’t have examples of women lusting in scripture (Job. 31:1; 2 Sam. 11:1-4). Our question comes from the title of this article: “Can Women Lust?” Is this what the scripture teaches?

When it comes to the topic of lust, an example that is commonly cited in this study is Joseph from Genesis 39. Here, a young man was presented with a temptation. There is recorded here an opportunity for Joseph to give

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into his lust and sin with Potiphar's wife. Instead, Joseph runs away from the temptation. While this is an excellent example to teach us about avoiding temptations and putting our faith in God, there is a key point that is often overlooked. Notice the one who is lusting in Genesis 39:6b-7: "*Now **Joseph was handsome in form and appearance**. And after a time **his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph** and said, 'Lie with me.'*" If it is true that women cannot lust, what is Potiphar's wife doing? She notices a good looking young man and she cast her eyes on him because she desires him. If that isn't lust, then I don't know what it is! Potiphar's wife admired Joseph's body and appearance and lusted after him! This is exactly what Matthew 5:26-27 was talking about! Some easily overlook this truth when reading over a passage that we have read numerous times. I've even heard some reference the account of Joseph as lust being a man's problem and they missed what is staring them in the face. We can see this in other passages like Song of Solomon 2:3 where the bride says, "*As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*" Here is a bride delighting in her husband. She finds him appealing! What about the book of Proverbs? Not only are passages like Proverbs 5:3-4 talking about immodesty and prostitution, they are also talking about the lustful woman as well. This is a warning to young men that lust does not equal love! We often warn young women about the danger of men who only lust after them but do not love them. The same can be true with how women treat men! Proverbs 5 describes the woman who looks good, and says all the right things, but in the end, she is bitter and will devour the young man. Paul also talks about women lusting in Romans 1:26-27. In Romans 1:26-27, Paul writes, "*For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For **their women** exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and **were consumed with passion for one another**, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*" Here is an example of a homosexual relationship between two women. Verse 27 describes women who were consumed with passion for one another just as the men were! If it is true that women cannot lust, why is Paul saying that they women were consumed with lust when there were no men in the equation?

The danger of the teaching that "women cannot lust or understand lust" results in not showing concern for our sisters in Christ. To twist passages like Matthew 5 to say what it does not is to teach false doctrine. If we

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spend any time talking to sisters in Christ, we will find that they struggle with lust. If we choose not to address this issue with which both genders struggle, we will find many of our women unequipped to make the stand against temptation. We can see the results of this when considering the sin of pornography. In 2009, it was reported that 1 out of 3 viewers of pornography are women (*New York Times*, 2009). We see marriages destroyed where women leave men for another just as men leave women. If we choose to pretend that women cannot struggle with the sin of lust just as men, we are telling them that what they may be doing is not sinful and it is not real. Yes, women can lust just as men can. Men and women need to strive to be pure and flee the temptations just as Joseph did (Gen. 39:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Tit. 2:5).



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