

How can you stop gossip and other critical talk in its tracks?

Always be ready to ask three simple questions.

If someone begins to share confidential or unfavorable information or opinions about another person, and you are not part of the problem or its solution, simply interrupt and ask:

“May I quote you when I talk with her about this?”

“Could we go to him together to discuss this?” or

“Instead of talking about her, could we pray for her right now?”

Questions like these can quickly expose the motives behind others' words. They can shield your ears from words that may poison your heart against another person. They will sometimes convert worthless talk into constructive action.

Best of all, this kind of response will honor God and ultimately earn you the respect and trust of the people around you.

– Ken Sande

Reflection Questions

What kinds of talk does the Bible warn us to avoid? What damage can such talk cause? (Prov. 12:18; Prov. 16:28; Prov. 24:28; Philippians 2:14; 2Tim. 2:16; Titus 2:3)

If people come to you often to share gossip and critical talk, what might that indicate about your willingness to listen to such talk?

Do you want to break free from the habit of speaking or listening to critical speech? Then consecrate your ears and your lips to God ... dedicate them to him every morning, asking him to give you grace to shun all speech that does not reflect the love of Christ (Eph. 4:29).

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