

GUARDING AGAINST THE DEFILEMENT OF AN EVIL REPORT

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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED...?

...what causes conflicts in families or churches to flare out of control and split entire groups? What causes close friendships to be broken when neither party offended the other? A major reason is the damage caused when an angry, offended person brings others into their offense. This is called the defilement of an evil report.

THE EXAMPLE WITH ABSALOM FROM 2 SAMUEL 13-18

1. During a dark period in the life of King David's family, Amnon raped Tamar, Absalom's sister. When Amnon was confronted by David, the consequences were not as severe as the act required. This caused such hatred in Absalom, who loved his sister, that he had his brother Amnon murdered.
2. Absalom had never fully forgiven his father for not taking more drastic action against Amnon. This unforgiveness became a way of life and years later he found the opportunity to rebel against the authority of his father and through slandering the King in the eyes of the people strategized an evil take-over of the kingdom which later cost him his life!
 - Proverbs 6:16-19 *These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:... one who sows discord among brethren.*
 - Proverbs 16:28 *A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.*
 - James 3:5-10 *...The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell..*

THE POWER OF A BITTER ROOT

1. Hebrews 12:14-15 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*
2. To **"defile" means to stain** (James 12:14-15) Satan knows that if he can get us to listen to evil or suggestive words about someone, he can insert a stained impression of that person to us. Many pastors and leaders have found their effectiveness destroyed by slander.



3. Why does this subtle device work so effectively? Simply because many people are unaware of the devil's devices.

DEFILEMENT AS A DISEASE

Being defiled by someone else's anger and evil words is similar to catching a disease! And in the same way that touching a diseased person will defile one's hands, listening to an evil report will defile one's heart and mind.

1. IGNORANCE - It begins with not being aware of the destructive power of someone who gives an evil report. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)

A. Who gives an evil report?

- A whisperer - A person who privately passes on evil reports to others (Psalm 41:7).
- A gossip - One who magnifies rumors or partial information (Proverbs 16:28; 20:19).
- A slanderer - One who seeks to destroy another's credibility or reputation with damaging facts, distortion of facts, or evil suspicions (Numbers 14:37).
- A busybody - One who digs up evil reports and makes it his/her business to spread them by means of gossip or slander. Such an action is as great a sin as murder or stealing. (1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15)

B. What motivates someone to give an evil report? (James 3:14-16)

- Anger & bitterness - Unresolved personal hurt or offense.
- Deception - Believing that we are doing God's Will by exposing an offender and involving others.
- Pride - Exalting our own righteousness.

2. EXPOSURE - We are exposed when we enter into a conversation with a carrier of an evil report. (Hebrews 12:14-15)

A. 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 or her to give you the report.
- A carrier will often get you to ask for the evil report by creating curiosity for it. Some starters are, "Have you heard about (name)?" "Wait till I tell you about (name)!"
- 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 words. (Psalm 57:4)

B. Important questions to ask a carrier...

- "What is your reason for telling me?" Widening the circle of gossip only compounds the problem.



- “Where did you get your information?” Refusal to identify the source of information is a sure sign of an evil report.
- “Have you gone to those directly involved?” Spirituality is not measured by how well we expose an offender, but by how effectively we restore that person. (Galatians 6:1-2)
- “Have you personally checked out all the facts?” Even facts become distorted when taken out of context.
- “Can I quote you if I check this out?” Or, “Can I set up a meeting where you can talk with the person who offended you?”

3. INFECTED - We are infected when we respond to an evil report before we hear the truth.
(Proverbs 17:4, 26:21)

- A. We are infected by an evil report about someone when we...
- Believe that the evil report is true without personal research and begin to form your own negative opinions based upon the report.
 - Focus on the negative aspects of the accused person’s character or motive and interpret that person’s words and actions as “supporting evidence.”
 - Judge that person’s motives based upon the evil report and back away from that person in your spirit.
 - Tell the evil report we received from someone else to others.

4. DISEASED - We are diseased when we are mentally and emotionally controlled by the evil report and the destructive spirit of the one who gave it. (Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 26:24-26)

- A. The diseased Christian has grieved the Holy Spirit by taking up the offenses of others and making them our own. We are diseased when we...
- Develop bitterness in your own heart against the one accused, even though you are not involved.
 - Join with the slanderer and begin recruiting others to “your side”.
 - Believe that your actions are actually accomplishing God’s will rather than realizing that others are given the occasion to blaspheme God’s Name because of a lack of genuine love. (1 Corinthians 6:5-8)

KEY - Hearing a slanderous report about someone has very strong appeal and we cannot be passive about this behavior! We are responsible to lovingly but firmly correct the person gossiping or slandering and not allow them to involve others into their circle of offense.

CLEANSING FROM DEFILEMENT

1. The defilement caused by receiving an evil report must be CLEANSED and then REPLACED with the spirit of Christ’s love and forgiveness.
2. We are commanded to pray FOR the one about whom the evil report has been given. (Matthew 5:11, 44; Romans 12:14-21)
3. We are cleansed when we loose the urge to tell someone else the report, when we grieve over the fact that an evil report was given, when we have genuine love toward the person involved

in the report and when we are prompt to examine your own life for failures.

As we learn to overcome this powerfully destructive force with knowledge and understanding we will have conquered a tremendous strategy of the enemy to cripple the church and will see a greater degree of the Presence of God in our midst!



QUESTION

What steps do I need to take to be healed from anger and a defilement of an evil report about someone else? Be specific...