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writings by Beth Ann Phifer



The Two G's

Gossip and Grudges

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There were two Hebrew idioms that were popular at the time of Yeshua (Jesus). I learned them from Brandon of Brandon Robbins Ministry. I will share the simple definitions of these idioms along with my thoughts about them... and then, I will get personal, so I hope you will keep reading!

Motzeh shem ra – Lies

The first idiom is *motzeh shem ra* which means *to put out a bad name* – to slander or lie. This action was so bad that the rabbis compared it to *metzora* or *leprosy* because at first you didn't notice it but then it became chronic and contagious.

Lashon hara – Negative truths

The second idiom is *lashon hara* which means *to tell negative truths*. Sharing *negative truths* about someone changes the way we and others see them. It harms their name.

Lashon hara reminds me of a quote from an old movie in which one woman said to another woman, "It's not gossip, it's common knowledge." This was meant to be funny. *Passing along negative truth* makes it *common knowledge*. We call this *gossip*. Gossip insidiously changes the atmosphere of relationships. And sharing *negative truth* about someone can turn into actual lies, because it often comes through an impure interpretation of the facts, making the information false.

Lois Tverberg writes in her book *Listening to the Language of the Bible*, "The rabbis commented that the sin of gossip is closer to that of murder than that of robbery. While a robber can repent and give everything back, a gossip can never undo all the damage he has done!" (Pg. 26)

Still, if we have shared *negative truth* inappropriately, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Yeshua Messiah the righteous"¹ and "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive and cleanse us..."² He also guides us to make the needed restitution as best we can.

If we are tempted to share *negative truth* about a brother or sister to others, Yeshua's words guide us: "If your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."³ Rather than sharing the *negative truths* to someone else, Yeshua instructs us to go directly to the person who has offended us. Over the years, I have seen that this loving confrontation is very difficult for most people; however, it is the way to health and restoration.

Grudges

A *grudge* is defined as *a feeling of resentment*. I would define *grudge* as *gossip that doesn't come out of your mouth*. A *grudge* is a *lie* or a *negative truth* about someone that talks back and forth in your head breeding bitterness. These thoughts affect our actions even if we don't want them to.

We learn from the Apostle Paul that we have "divinely powerful weapons for the destruction of these fortresses" in our minds and that we can "take every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah."⁴

Application

- We know there is never a good reason to hold a grudge or to lie. But is there ever a **good reason** to share *negative truth* about another person? What do you think? I thought of one reason with two examples:

The only good reason to share a *negative truth* about someone is if that sharing will bear fruit and not damage someone's reputation. Here are two examples:

1. When you are seeking counsel. Usually a counselor is neutral, and their office is a place to air your thoughts freely. We may need a different perspective to find healing from the offenses of others.
 2. When the other people present need to hear the truth. The Apostle Paul confronts individuals publicly with *negative truth* for the purpose of everyone gaining truth. He rebuked Cephas (Simon Peter) "in the presence of all" and instructs Timothy to do the same.⁵ I remember being in a new Bible study in which someone was teaching against Scripture. Even though my heart was pounding with nervousness, I spoke up, so that others would not be misled. I gently said, "But what about..." and shared Scripture. If I had waited to talk with the person alone, others would have been misled.
- So, what are **wrong reasons** to share *negative truth* about another person?

When comments from a neighbor leak into a conversation to lure me into speaking *negative truth* about someone, it is easy for me to thwart that conversation because they are mere acquaintances. But I have two friends with whom I share a lot. These Hebrew idioms have been like a sharp, two-edged sword heightening my awareness of the gravity of the results of my words.

Here is an incomplete list of reasons we share *negative truth*. They are only wrong reasons (selfish rather than life-giving) if someone's reputation is damaged by our sharing:

1. We shared to find answers and solutions to our situation.
2. We shared to gain a reference point, perspective, and feedback.
3. We shared because our heart was breaking, and we didn't want to be alone.

Conclusion

There are many nuances to this subject, so we need discernment from the Holy Spirit. For instance, what might be negative to one person is not negative to another. Or perhaps we know that "the person" would want the *negative truth* to be told about them for one reason or another.

We should seek our heavenly Father's counsel first. He is our Wonderful Counselor, our Eternal Father, our Prince of Peace,⁶ and our Best Friend.⁷ If we ask Him, He will answer in His time. Sometimes He uses others. Since we are His hands and feet in this world, our best counselors are often our friends – the ones who know us well and who are willing to speak the truth to us. (A true friend is one who will confront us.)

Still, let's ask Him for discernment, always check our motives, and think about what the damaging result of our words may be. Our desire should always be to protect the reputation of others. After all, we all need grace, mercy, and second chances.

Father, let me hear Your faithfulness in the morning for I trust in You;
Teach me the way in which I should walk for to You I lift up my soul. (Psalm 143:8)

¹ 1 John 2:1b

² See 1 John 1:9

³ Matthew 18:15 (Please read this verse in its context; for the purpose of this writing, I will look at this verse alone.)

⁴ 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

⁵ Galatians 2:14 in the context of Galatians 2:11-21; 1 Timothy 5:20

⁶ Isaiah 9:6

⁷ John 15:15