

# Guarding My Neighbor's Good Name

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- The ninth commandment of 613 instructed Israel to protect the good names of their neighbors.
  - Ex. 20:16 - “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”
- Difficult, because the tongue is hard to control.

## James 3:2-10

“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. 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. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

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- God made us accountable for our neighbors' well-being.
  - James 2:8-9 - “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.”
  - Rom. 15:2 - “Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.”
  - Prov. 3:29 - “Do not devise evil against your neighbor, For he dwells by you for safety's sake.”

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- That includes his name.
  - Lev. 19:16-18 - “You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. 17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”

# A Name Is A Precious Possession

- Prov. 22:1 - “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold.”
- Ecc. 7:1 - “A good name is better than precious ointment.”
- A reputation determines the level of respect one receives; no one puts confidence in a person who is dishonest or living sin.
- Luke 2:52 - “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

# A Name Is A Precious Possession

- A reputation determines the response one receives.
- The world will not believe what we say until they see what we believe.
- Our reputation is important because what people perceive us to be is usually a fair indicator of what we really are.
  - Reputation is what others think of us; character is what we really are.

# A Name Is A Precious Possession

- Our own reputations are valuable. We protect them diligently and pray that others will do the same.
- We cannot be responsible for what others do with our reputation, but we are responsible for what we do with theirs.



# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- It is a serious thing.
  - When one undermines the reputation of another, he is guilty of destroying that person's credibility with others.
  - The words that damage a good name can be forgiven, but they may never be forgotten by those touched by their poison.

“The man who with the breathe lent him by heaven,  
Speaks words that soil the whiteness of a life;  
Is but murder, for death is given,  
As surely by the tongue as by the knife!” *(Jean Blewett)*

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- It is a sad thing.
- Slander - “Communication of false statements injurious to a person's reputation.”
  - We are guilty of slander when we knowingly lie about another person in an effort to harm their reputation.
  - We are guilty of slander when we repeat another’s speculation without our first-hand knowledge of the matter.

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Lying - “A false statement deliberately presented as being true.”
  - 87% of Americans do not believe in absolute truth.
  - 91% of Americans lie on a weekly basis.
  - 60% freely admit to lying daily.
  - 92% will lie to save face.
  - 98% will lie to avoid offending someone.
  - 86% will lie to or about someone else for personal advantage.
  - Aaron the first high priest lied - Ex. 32:24

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Criticism - “Statements made about another's actions and words in an effort to hurt his standing.”
  - Sometimes it is sin in our own hearts that moves us look for evil in others.

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Tale bearing - “The practice of sharing rumors about others.”
  - If we learn a secret about our neighbor, we should ask ourselves the question, “What would we want our neighbor to do if he heard the same thing about us?” And then, do it for him.

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Insinuation - “The practice of implying that something may be wrong with another.”
- Satan tried to use this tactic against Job.
  - Job 1:9-11 - “So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’”
  - Job 2:5 - “But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Flattery - “Saying something good to a person that we would not say to another in his absence.”
- Flattery is a form of lying.
  - Job 32:21-22 - “Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man. 22 For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.”

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Exaggeration - “Increasing or decreasing any number of facts in the account to make matters look better or worse.”



# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Silence - Remaining silent when an objection is morally mandated.
  - One becomes party to the deception by failing to set the record straight.
  - Prov. 26:20-28

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Prov. 26:20-28 - “Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. 21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife. 22 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, And they go down into the inmost body. 23 Fervent lips with a wicked heart Are like earthenware covered with silver dross. 24 He who hates, disguises it with his lips, And lays up deceit within himself; 25 When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart; 26 Though his hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. 27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him. 28 A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, And a flattering mouth works ruin.”

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Prov. 12:22 - "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal truthfully are His delight."
- Eph. 4:25 - "Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."

# A Name Can Be Vandalized

- Prov. 6:16-19 - “These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:  
17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.”

# A Good Name Should Be Protected

- Confront the gossip.
  - Be quick to stand for those who are being hurt by a gossip.
  - We share in the gossip's guilt when we say nothing.
  - Be aware that most gossips are sneaky people. They will turn their tongue on you, too.
  - Every gossip that gossips to you, will probably gossip about you.

# A Good Name Should Be Protected

- Correct the guilty.
  - Say nothing to anyone except God until you have spoken to the neighbor in need.
  - Prov. 11:13 - “A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.”
  - Prov. 17:9 - “He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends.”
  - 1Peter 4:8 - “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.”

# A Good Name Should Be Protected

- When it comes to speaking of others, **THINK** first:
  - **T** - Is it **T**ue?
  - **H** - Will it **H**elp?
  - **I** - Is it **I**nspiring?
  - **N** - Is it **N**ecessary?
  - **K** - Is it **K**ind?
- If it doesn't meet these qualifications, shut up.