

The Merciful Life, Part 2 | withhold slander

I. What is slander?

- Merriam-Webster defines “slander” as “the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another’s reputation.”
- The Greek word translated “slander” in this verse is also translated “blaspheme” when aimed at God.
- Therefore, we could say that a slanderous individual is someone who desires to tear down difficult people and situations. And they most often do this by gossiping and lying and manipulating.
- It’s foolish because it denies God’s reality. Proverbs 10:18 says, “*Whoever utters slander is a fool.*”
- It’s a product of sinful anger. And . . .
- Most often it’s a lie — whether intentional or not.
- Whether we’re telling the truth about someone to malign their character or lying about them, we’re being manipulative and unmerciful.

II. How do we address slander in our lives?

- **We need to have our delusion confronted.**
 - There is nothing more important than truth.
 - But this isn’t just a question about the truthfulness of our words. We also need to consider the truthfulness of our intentions.
- **We need to accept responsibility for the consequences of our slander.**
 - Slander is not only a result of anger, it’s — more often than not — a lie. There will be Primary Consequences and — potentially — Secondary Consequences for that sin. And we need to take full responsibility instead of blaming other people.
- **We need Bible, not pragmatism.**
 - I Timothy 6:3-5; Jude 1:8-10; Psalm 15
 - Pragmatism is a philosophy that assesses the value of something based off the success of its practical application. “If my slander accomplishes what I want, it must be good.” If I can justify it with the worldly notion that, “He deserved it,” than I’m okay.
 - Instead of hurting people, the Bible commands us to serve. Instead of lying about people, we’re taught to speak the Truth.
 - One way to fill ourselves with truth is to ask our closest friends to keep us accountable.
- **We need to replace slander with mercy.**
 - Ephesians 4:25; Matthew 23:1-3
 - Obviously all lying is right out. But what about when someone actually does something wicked, and you need to share it with someone else?
 - We need to start with our own hearts. Why are we saying it? If there’s any anger, we’re probably going to slander. If we want the other person to be mad at them, we’re slandering.
 - You can be merciful and still speak the truth. But mercy demands that you don’t try to demean the other person.

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