

Don't Say it in Gath

“Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.” – II Samuel 1:20

Much of what this article references is found in Internet chat rooms. A significant portion is conducted over cell phones and in private conversations – sometimes in the lobbies of our churches. All of us are guilty of it. No one I know has an unblemished record. But it seems to me that an untoward and unscriptural fascination with the gory details – true or reported – of the sordid behavior of our fallen brothers and sisters is all too much a part of many of our lives. We have become consumers of carrion, Baptist buzzards, purveyors of putrid pollution. We love to give the details of what So-and-So did; particularly if we had taken a position different from that person to begin with. Here are a few thoughts on this all-too-frequent phenomenon.



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We Must Stand

Let me state clearly and unequivocally from the outset that I am not for covering up sin. I do not believe that pastors who commit adultery can stay in the ministry. I do not knowingly have divorced preachers in my pulpit. I do not believe that it is appropriate to give a positive recommendation to another ministry of one who has had a moral failure. I believe that while there are some failures from which we may be restored, full disclosure is generally appropriate when going to a new ministry.

We Must Not be Scavengers

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.” – Proverbs 17:9

To what purpose do we spread this evil? What help is it to the young Christian, the struggling convert, or our teenagers that we wallow in this kind of mire? It is our human nature to be fascinated with this kind of material. From the rubbernecks on the road to the gossipmongers in the pew, we all have the same temptation and tendency. It does not please God.

Why can't we take a stand against a brother's philosophy without having to repeat unproven details about their personal life?

Is not the truth strong enough that if we present it, our position will stand without having to attack the character of the person we oppose? (I do understand that a person's character does go to their credibility. I do not believe that it helps the cause of Christ for us to publicize a person's failings in an effort to stand against their philosophy.)

We Must Not Support Spiritual Scavengers

We would be wise not to read what they have to say.

We would be wise not to refer to it. How many times have we piqued someone's curiosity while preaching against something that another has done? We have made our listeners wonder what was said and done – and perhaps even encouraged them to “do research” into the matter.

I once heard a well-known man say, for example, “I will not be part of the scandalous gossip against Bro. _____. As far I am concerned, if I walked into a room and he was lying on top of a young lady, I'd think he was giving her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.” Of course, all of the listeners wondered what Bro. _____ had been accused of. No favors were done to the one who was referenced in this report.

- **We are wisest of all not to respond.** It is true that “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and

loving favor rather than silver and gold. “ (Proverbs 22:1)

- If a person says I have stolen money, I will answer his questions, offer him access to our books, and challenge him to prove his allegation. If a person says that I have been unfaithful to my wife, I will similarly face him.
- If a person says I am insincere, if a person says I am egotistical, if a person says I'm lazy, if a person says I am motivated by my success rather than God's, I will ignore them. There is, in the first place, no way to prove the accuracy of their allegations, nor my innocence.
- In the second place, I elevate them to a level of importance they do not deserve when I respond to them.

I used to say, in reference to a particular paper which is now thankfully defunct, “Some people just deserve to be ignored.” The older I get, the more people there are that I believe richly deserve to be completely ignored.