

# Authentic Community Killers

**Gossip and Unity are mutually exclusive. In other words, if one is to be present, the other must be absent. If you enjoy Gossiping, forget about experiencing Unity in the Body of Christ. But on the other hand if we desire unity, we must commit ourselves to stamping out gossip of any form.**

## Discuss

Share examples of where you have seen Gossip kill authentic community.

Have you been gossiped about? Have you been the gossiper? What was the result?

If you have already shared your story....did you feel like this Gospel Community was a "safe" environment to do so and to what degree? Was fear of Gossip a factor in determining what you shared?

## What is Unity?

**John 17:23** I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

**Eph 4:3** being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Eph 4:13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

**Col 3:14** Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

## What is Gossip?

Gossip is.....saying something in someone's absence that you would never say in their presence.

Flattery is a close cousin of Gossip and is....saying something to someone's face that you would never say in their absence. Both Gossip and Flattery are enemies to an authentic community. Gossip is a

passive-aggressive form of cowardice whereby we attempt to negatively shape perceptions of another person in their absence. It may appear subtle and harmless at first, but with each instance the trust in a

community erodes. People either check out physically and move on or they remain in the community while closing off emotionally. Either way, Gossip has a devastating effect on the Bride who Jesus died to

redeem. When Gossip is allowed in a community...Alliances are formed, Unity is destroyed and Authentic Community dies a painful death. When tempted to Gossip or when tempted to lend an ear to Gossip, ask

yourself the following question. "What is going in my own heart that would lead me to derive some

enjoyment by seeing another person dragged through the mud?" If you are honest, you are likely to

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**Gossip is explicitly Forbidden In the Scriptures.** Read the following verses and discuss the implications for our community: Lev. 19:16; Psa. 15:1-3; Prov. 11:13; Prov. 16:28; Prov. 17:9; Prov. 18:8; Prov. 20:19; Prov. 26:20-22; 1 Tim. 5:11, 13

We will continue to grow in trust and authenticity as we...

Refuse to speak disparagingly about anyone (even more so those in the family of God).

Refuse to participate in a critical discussion about others when they are not present to defend themselves. Period.

Regularly ask each other in the moment "Would you say that, with the same tone/sarcasm/body-language/etc, if he/she were present?"

Take problems that we may have with someone in the family of God, first to God in prayer and then second directly to the person for resolution.

Challenge the gossiper to join us in meeting the other person to sort out the situation.