



“A Backbiter! Ouch!”



Have you ever talked to somebody who began telling you ugly things about another person, that you know that other person wouldn't want anyone to say about them? And did you find yourself thinking, “I wonder what this person says about me when I'm not around? I'm sure glad she's not my friend – with a friend like that, who needs enemies?”

A person who talks unkindly or speaks evil about an absent person is called a backbiter. A backbiter knowingly or maliciously makes accusations to put down another person and hurt their reputation in the eyes of the listener.



In Psalm 15, David asked, “*Lord, who shall abide (live forever) in your temple? Who shall dwell in your holy sanctuary?*” The Lord answered and told David, “*It will be he who walks and lives uprightly and blamelessly, and speaks and thinks truth in his heart.*

He who does not backbite with his tongue; or be a tale-bearer (tattle-tale); and does not bring disgrace or shame against his neighbor.”

A neighbor is someone living near you – for a short time or an extended period. Paul, the apostle, told the Christians in Galatia that to have true liberty they must serve one another in love, “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, and that is this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But, if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you don't be destroyed by each other.*” (Galatians 5:14,15)



Backbiting destroys unity. Unity is a requirement in the Body of Christ, of which you are a part, just as it is a requirement in our own body for it to keep working right. Every part must be in unity with every other part. Unity can only happen through love and taking care of every part to nourish it and build it up.

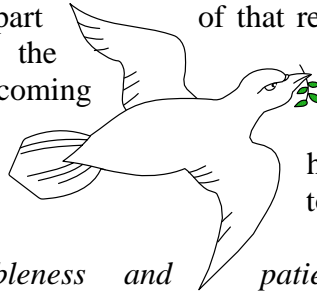
Can there be unity in a group – even a small group – with so many different viewpoints, personalities, opinions and life experiences? The only way unity can be achieved is by accepting these differences in each other, without criticizing, or judging, or backbiting them because you think they should do things the way you would.

For a group to achieve unity: they must look at each other through the eyes of God, (the only one who knows why they act the way they do); have the mind of Christ (who loves that other person as much as He loves you); and to ask themselves, “What would Jesus have said about this person? Would it be what I said?”

(Cont'd)

In 2 Corinthians 12:20, Paul feared that when he returned to the people who had become Christians under his ministry, he would find strife, backbitings and whisperings among them and his work would have been in vain. Why is backbiting and whispering about someone else so harmful? It's because if any part of the body has resentment against another, it is in rebellion against the whole body and attracts other parts to become rebellious too and they cut themselves off from the unity of the rest of the body and become like a cancer in the body.

Let us not be any part of that rebellious member of the Body of Christ, but remain a part of the healthy, wholesome, unblemished Body that Jesus is soon coming back to receive unto Himself. Choose now to begin to be in total unity, letting the love of Jesus control our tongue and how we speak and act toward others, so people don't have to be afraid if you are standing behind them.



“With all humbleness and patience, accept one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling.” (Ephesians 4:2-4)



“A Backbiter! Ouch!”

1. What does a backbiter bite with?

2. Who is a backbiter?

3. Why did Jesus say to love my neighbor as myself?

4. How does unity happen?

5. How much does Jesus love my neighbor?

6. If any part of the Body is rebellious, what happens?

7. What does rebellion become like in the Body?

8. How can I control my tongue and actions toward others?

9. Do people have to be careful never to turn their back to me?

10. How can I always avoid backbiting? (Ephesians 4:2,3)
(The answer to this question will be your memory verse)

MEMORY VERSE _____

“A Backbiter! Ouch!”

1. What does a backbiter bite with?

Their tongue.

2. Who is a backbiter?

A person who talks unkindly or speaks evil about an absent person.

3. Why did Jesus say to love my neighbor as myself?

Because backbiting destroys unity in the Body of Christ.

4. How does unity happen?

Only through love, acceptance, and care of the Body.

5. How much does Jesus love my neighbor?

Just as much as He loves me.

6. If any part of the Body is rebellious, what happens?

Other parts of the body join in the rebellion.

7. What does rebellion become like in the Body?

A cancer.

8. How can I control my tongue and actions toward others?

Choose to let the love of Jesus control my speech and actions toward others.

9. Do people have to be careful never to turn their back to me?

_____ Only you can answer that.

10. How can I always avoid backbiting? (Ephesians 4:2,3)

MEMORY VERSE “With all humbleness and patience, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”