

**PSALM 25: 4-5 "SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, O LORD" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES –
LEARNER'S PACKET - LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

LESSON #10 – GOD'S WAY OF SPEAKING

GOD'S WAY – A minister was making a wooden trellis to support a climbing vine. As he was pounding away, he noticed a little boy watching him. The youngster didn't say a word, and the preacher kept on working, thinking the lad would leave. He didn't. Thinking his work was being admired, the minister said, "Well, son, are you trying to pick up some pointers on carpentry?" "No, sir," the boy replied. "I'm just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer." It might be interesting to find out, but this lesson deals with how each of us can learn God's Way of Speaking.

THE PRAYER –We begin with a prayer from an anonymous author: "Lord Grant this one request I pray: Guide thou my tongue! The words I say can never be called back again, should they cause anger, sorrow; pain then in an ever-widening sphere, they spread their havoc far and near. So guide my tongue in every word, that it may bless where it is heard." In Jesus' Name. Amen.

THE WORLD'S WAY – Gossip is a universal. Look at what some countries have said about it:

- From England: A gossip usually makes a mountain out of a molehill by adding some _____.
- From America: Gossip is nothing more than social _____.
- From Yugoslavia: He who gossips to you will gossip _____you.
- From Spain: Never tell evil of a man, if you do not know it for _____, and if you know it for a certainty, then ask yourself, "Why should I tell it?"
- From Russia: None are so fond of _____as those who do not mean to _____them.
- From Italy: Nothing makes a long story _____like the arrival of the person you happen to be talking about.
- From Japan: Half the evil in the world is gossip started by _____people.
- From Brazil: No gossip ever dies away entirely, if many people voice it: it becomes a _____to whom all pay homage.
- From Egypt: Of every ten persons who talk about you, nine will say something bad, and the tenth will say something _____in a _____way.

THOUGHT: Look at the gossipy things that were said about Jesus:

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 –

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Luke 15: 2	What did the Pharisees say about Jesus?	_____
John 9: 16	What did some of the them say?	_____
John 11: 47-50	What did they say behind Jesus' back?	_____
Luke 23: 2	What did they say before Pilate?	_____
Matthew 26: 59	What did they look for?	_____.

The leaders of the Jews should have remembered the law that was given to Moses in Exodus 23: 1 - 2: "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness. Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice ..." They should have remembered that making up, or spreading gossip was forbidden by God. Because of these false reports God's Son was crucified. Because of other lies, preachers were persecuted and hounded from one place to another. Sadly, it is still, even in many Christian places, the same today.

FIRST APPLICATION:

Let me tell you how it works. Imagine three struggling churches. One of the churches calls a gifted pastor. His sermons are relevant and scriptural. His personality is loving and powerful. He was a wonderful teacher, and people wanted to hear what he had to say. Slowly, the unchurched came to worship. So did members from the other congregations. That's when jealousy began to gossip. "Surely God does not use such newfangled styles of ministry. Is he preaching false doctrine?" Somebody remem-

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bered something. "Was there some kind of indiscretion way-back-when?" No one was sure. But the rumor spread. People wondered. The pastor was shunned, his family shamed. Gossip had destroyed a man, turned Christians into liars, and corrupted the church. So dangerous is the tongue that Scripture speaks very specifically about its use. Look at these passages and answer the questions which follow:

2. SCRIPTURE SEARCH - THE WAY OF GOD IS GOOD AND BEST

PASSAGE	QUESTION	ANSWER
Proverbs 25: 18	What is false testimony like?	_____
2 Thess. 3: 11-13	What is wrong with some of the people?	_____
v. 12	What should they do?	_____
v. 13	And then?	_____
Ephesians 4: 25	What should we do?	_____
	Why should we do that?	_____
Matthew 12: 34	According to Jesus, where do our words come from? _____	
	Good words come from where? How about bad words? _____	
Matthew 15: 17-18	Where do our words come from? What do they do? _____	
Matthew 15: 19	What are some of the sins we commit by tongue? _____	

Gossip is not God's way of speaking. Gossip locks a person into the _____, tying a person to a past sin that may be _____. Jesus' followers need to realize that someone else's sins should not be the subject of our continuing _____. When we hear about someone doing something wrong, we should treat it as we treat _____ on our clothes. Work with it when it is new, you rub the mud into the cloth; but if you wait until it is dry, you can brush it off. It disappears. Other alternatives are disastrous.

THOUGHT & ILLUSTRATION: - So says this story which comes from the middle ages. A man went to his priest and said, "I've sinned by telling slanderous statements about someone in the parish. What is my penance?" The priest replied, "The first part of your penance is to put a feather on every doorstep in town." The young man did it. He then returned to the priest and asked if there was anything else he should do?" The priest said, "Indeed, now I want you to go back and gather up all the feathers." The young man protested, "That's impossible! By now the wind will have blown them all over the place!" Said the priest, "So has your slanderous word become impossible to recover." To encourage God's Way of Speaking, we offer the following points to govern our conversations about others:

1. Ask, "What is the reason I am being told this information?" _____
2. Ask, "Where did you get your information?" _____
3. Ask, "Have you gone to those directly involved?" _____
4. Ask, "Have you personally checked out all of the facts?" _____
5. Ask, "May I use your name if I check out this story, or try to do something about it?" _____
6. Ask, "If people are always telling me garbage about others, what does that say they think about you?" _____

THE WAY OF PRAYER – Dear Lord, we give thanks for that which is a most precious possession: a good name. Even as we value it for ourselves, may we respect it in others. Guard our tongues, that all we say may glorify You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.