

# Proverbs 20:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:  
therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

## Analysis

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The 'talebearer' (Hebrew 'rachil,' one who goes about spreading gossip) reveals secrets and sows discord. Such a person cannot be trusted; they will expose confidences for entertainment or manipulation. Therefore, 'meddle not'—avoid close association with gossips. This protects both your secrets and your soul from the corrupting influence of slander. Gossip violates love of neighbor and often constitutes bearing false witness. It destroys reputations, fractures relationships, and dishonors God. The godly person guards confidences, speaks truth in love, and refuses to participate in destructive speech. Wise friendship requires discretion and trustworthiness.

## Historical Context

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In close-knit ancient communities, gossip could destroy reputations and social standing. The law's prohibition against slander (Leviticus 19:16) recognized speech's power to harm.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. Do you guard confidences faithfully, or are you prone to sharing others' private matters?
2. What relationships might you need to distance from due to patterns of gossip?

## Interlinear Text

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גֹּזֶלֶת	תִּדְכַּר	הַוְלֵן	בְּכִילָה	לִלְפְּתַח	הַ
revealeth	secrets	He that goeth about	as a talebearer	not with him that flattereth	
H1540	H5475	H1980	H7400	H6601	
לְאַשְׁפְּתִּי	תַּתְעַרְבֵּן				
with his lips	H3808	therefore meddle			
H8193		H6148			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 11:13** (Parallel theme): A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

**Proverbs 18:8** (Parallel theme): The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

**Proverbs 13:3** (Parallel theme): He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

**Romans 16:18** (Parallel theme): For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

**Leviticus 19:16** (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

**Proverbs 24:21** (Parallel theme): My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:

**Proverbs 16:29** (Parallel theme): A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.

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