

# Psalms 15:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

## Analysis

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This verse describes the righteous person's speech ethics: no slander ('ragal' - going about as a talebearer), no evil to a neighbor, and no reproach against friends. The Hebrew 'ragal' literally means 'to go about on foot as a spy,' indicating gossip. James 3 echoes this teaching about the tongue's destructive power. Reformed ethics sees speech as covenant faithfulness—our words should build up, not tear down (Ephesians 4:29).

## Historical Context

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Written as wisdom for those dwelling in God's presence (Psalm 15:1). Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature consistently condemned slander as socially destructive.

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How carefully do you guard against participating in gossip or slander?
2. In what ways do your words build up your neighbors rather than tear them down?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא      לֹא      בְּגַלְוָן      עַל      לְשָׁנוֹ וְ      לֹא      בְּשָׁהַת הָ

H3808    **He that backbiteth**    H5921    **not with his tongue**    H3808    **nor doeth**  
H7270

לְרָעַ הָ      בְּעַת הָ      עַל      לֹא      בְּשָׁהַת אָ      עַל

**to his neighbour**    **evil**    **a reproach**    H3808    **nor taketh up**    H5921  
H7453    H7451    H2781

בְּרָבָן:  
**against his neighbour**  
H7138

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 13:10** (Parallel theme): Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

**Matthew 7:12** (Parallel theme): Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

**James 4:11** (Evil): Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

**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.

**3 John 1:11** (Evil): Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

**Isaiah 56:2** (Evil): Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

**Proverbs 25:3** (Parallel theme): The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.

**Proverbs 22:10** (Parallel theme): Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

**Romans 1:30** (Evil): Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,