THE QUESTION

How did the early church describe backbiting, slander, gossip and whispering?

Asked by a THF member on April 12, 2026 · published November 9, 2026, updated November 11, 2026 · 13 numbered quotations · the 37 early Christian passages and 184 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/how-did-the-early-church-describe-backbiting-slander-gossip-and-whispering

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

Early Christian writers named backbiting, slander, gossip and whispering as serious sins to put away. They list them beside lying, pride and malice, warn that listening to slander and believing it shares in the sin, and describe the whisperer as someone who cannot keep what he was told. Cyprian also warns against spreading unproven reports.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
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POINT 1 OF 8

Hermas counts backbiting among the worst sins

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

In his list of evils a servant of God must hold back from, Hermas puts backbiting and every kind of slander beside lies, pride and hypocrisy. He calls them some of the most wicked deeds in human life.

1

> “Listen," he says: "from adultery and sexual immorality, from unlawful feasting, from wicked luxury, from indulging in many kinds of food and the extravagance of riches, and from boastfulness, haughtiness, insolence, lies, backbiting, hypocrisy, remembering wrongs, and every kind of slander. These are the deeds that are most wicked in human life.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 3, page 7 **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 2 OF 8

Enjoying slander shares in the sin

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Hermas warns not only against speaking evil of others but against enjoying hearing it. If you believe the slander, you share the speaker's sin. He compares slander to a restless demon that never lets peace stay. Clement of Rome likewise says God hates not only those who do such things but those who take pleasure in them.

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2 "First, do not speak evil of anyone, and do not enjoy listening to anyone who speaks evil of another person. But if you listen, you will share in the sin of the one who speaks evil, if you believe the slander you hear."

later in the same passage

"For slander is evil, and it is an unstable demon. It never stays in peace, but always remains in conflict."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Hermas,** *Shepherd* (c. 90–150 AD) **Source 2, page 7** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

3 "For those who do such things are hateful to God; and not only they who do them, but also those who take pleasure in those who do them."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 35, page 9** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 3 OF 8

Clement tells believers to stand far from whispering

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Rome names whispering and evil-speaking among the things Christians must throw away if they want to share in God's promised gifts. In another place he pairs staying far from them with concord, humility and self-control.

4 "If our understanding is fixed by faith towards God; if we earnestly seek the things which are pleasing and acceptable to Him; if we do the things which align with His blameless will; and if we follow the way of truth, casting away from us all unrighteousness and iniquity, along with all covetousness, strife, evil practices, deceit, whispering, and evil-speaking, all hatred of God, pride and arrogance, vanity and ambition."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 35, page 9** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

5 "Let us clothe ourselves with concord and humility, ever exercising self-control, standing far off from all whispering and evil-speaking, being justified by our works, and not our words."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 36, page 9** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

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POINT 4 OF 8

Scripture pictures speaking against one's own brother

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement quotes a psalm that describes a person sitting and speaking against his own brother. This is a clear scriptural example of slander aimed at someone close. He also quotes the call to keep the tongue from evil.

6 “You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 35, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

7 “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 37, page 9** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 8

Ignatius lists gossip among sins to drop

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

A letter under Ignatius's name uses the word gossip itself. It tells each believer to put off gossip, slander and evil-speaking along with malice, envy and drunkenness, and instead to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 “Lay aside, each of you, all malice and beast-like fury, evil-speaking, slander, filthy speaking, lewdness, gossip, arrogance, drunkenness, lust, greed, vanity, envy, and everything similar to these.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistles of Ignatius* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 5, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 6 OF 8

Clement of Alexandria shows the harm of whispering

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Clement of Alexandria explains an old saying about not keeping a swallow in the house. He reads it as a warning against the chatty whisperer who cannot keep what he was told, and against fault-finding slander. Elsewhere he says slander serves the sword and brings disasters.

9 “That means you should not receive a talkative, whispering, chatty person who cannot keep to himself what has been told to him.”

later in the same passage

“The murmuring of the turtle-dove also points to the ungrateful slander of fault-finding, and so it is rightly driven out of the house.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 5.5 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 15, page 8** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

10 “And just as people whose speech is evil are no better than those whose actions are evil—for slander serves the sword, and evil-speaking causes pain, and from these come disasters in life, since such are the results of evil speech—so also those who are devoted to good speech are very close to those who do good deeds.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 1.10 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 12, page 8** Read it in the library ›

THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 8

Cyprian warns against biting words and false rumors

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian warns believers not to bite and find fault with one another, and to keep away from insulting speech, since revilers do not reach God's kingdom. In another letter he rebukes people who enjoy spreading things they cannot prove, trying to stain the innocent with lying reports.

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11 "But if you bite and find fault with one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. I also beg you to keep away from abusive and insulting speech, for revilers do not attain the kingdom of God."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 23, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

12 "Even if they are not able to destroy and ruin innocence, they are still satisfied to throw stains on it by lying reports and false rumors."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 20, page 8** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 8 OF 8

A later church order bars slander in bishops

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Apostolic Constitutions, a later church order (around the 4th century), say a bishop must not be a slanderer or double-tongued, nor quick to listen to slander. He is to teach the same to all the people by his example.

13 "Let him not be covetous or grasping, not a thief, not one who admires the rich or hates the poor, not a slanderer or a false witness, not easily angered, not quarrelsome, not entangled in the affairs of this life, not a guarantor for anyone, and not an accuser in money disputes."

later in the same passage

"Let him not be quick to listen to slander or evil-speaking, not a hypocrite, not devoted to heathen festivals, not given to empty deceptions, not eager for worldly things, and not a lover of money."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 27, page 9** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don't tell us

- These passages mostly list and warn against these sins; they do not give careful definitions that separate gossip, backbiting, slander and whispering from each other.
- They do not lay out a step-by-step church discipline for someone caught gossiping.

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- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 37 early Christian passages and 184 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–37, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 38–113, in Bible order), then 108 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF's updated English unless marked "1885 English" (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). "… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *37 passages from 14 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 15 (1885 English) "18:15-17 but to every one that acts amiss against another, let no one speak, nor let him hear anything from you until he repents… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 2–4*

2 *Shepherd* **Quote 2, page 3** "But if you listen, you will share in the sin of the one who speaks evil, if you believe the slander you hear. For if you believe it, you too… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Shepherd* **Quote 1, page 2** "of food and the extravagance of riches, and from boastfulness, haughtiness, insolence, lies, backbiting, hypocrisy, remembering wrongs, and every kind of slander. These are the deeds that are most wicked… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Shepherd* (on point 1) "Deceit. And their followers are called Sorrow, Wickedness, Wantonness, Anger, Falsehood, Folly, Backbiting, and Hatred. The servant of God who bears these names will indeed see the kingdom of God… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 5–7*

5 *Epistles of Ignatius* **Quote 8, page 4** "you in the Lord! Be sober. Lay aside, each of you, all malice and beast-like fury, evil-speaking, slander, filthy speaking, lewdness, gossip, arrogance, drunkenness, lust, greed, vanity, envy… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 5) "from haughtiness, "for the Lord resisteth the proud." Abhor falsehood, for says [the Scripture], "Thou shalt destroy all them that speak lies." Guard against envy, for its author is the… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Epistles of Ignatius* adulterers, nor effeminate persons, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor fornicators, nor revilers, nor drunkards, nor thieves can inherit the kingdom of God." And again, "If the dead do… [continues online] **read ›**

Justin Martyr, *c. 130–165 AD · source 8*

8 *Dialogue with Trypho* (on point 4) "mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit. You sit and testify against your brother and slander your own mother's son. When you did these things and I… [continues online] **read ›**

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Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 9–11*

9 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English; on point 4) “thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Against Heresies: Book IV* effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." He said these things not to those… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Heresies: Book V* (1885 English) “not err,” he says: “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor rapacious persons, shall inherit the… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 12–15*

12 *Stromata* 1.10 (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** “as those whose speech is evil are no better than those whose practice is evil (for calumny is the servant of the sword, and evil-speaking inflicts pain… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *Stromata* 6.10 (1885 English) “neither of unfounded calumny, nor of the false opinion around him… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Instructor* 3.11 “stir up sexual desires. Therefore, spectacles and plays that are full of vulgarity and endless gossip must be forbidden. For what shameful act is not shown in the theaters? And… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Stromata* 5.5 **Quote 9, page 5** “that a swallow should not be kept in the house. That means you should not receive a talkative, whispering, chatty person who cannot keep to himself what has been told… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 16–17*

16 *Ad Nationes* 7 (1885 English) “it creeps on somehow to ears and tongues which pass it on and so obscures the humble error in which it began, that no one considers whether the mouth which… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Apology* 7 (1885 English) “is rumour such an evil thing? Is it because it is fleet… [continues online] **read ›**

Origen, *c. 215–254 AD · sources 18–19*

18 *Commentary on John* 5 words you shall not escape sin, but in sparing your lips you shall be wise.” Here I ask whether speaking many words of any kind is a multitude of words… [continues online] **read ›**

19 *De Principiis (On First Principles)* 3 (1885 English) “if those demons who excite the tongues of men to slander were so infuriated by that work, in which he had not as yet fully unveiled their secret proceedings, what… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 20–26*

20 *Epistles* (1885 English) **Quote 12, page 6** “whist the apostle says: Let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth, but that which is good to the edifying of faith, that it may minister grace unto the hearers… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Epistles* (on point 7) it is written, “Revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” in 1 Corinthians 6:10, and again the Lord says in His Gospel, “Whoever says to his brother, ‘You… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Epistles* (on point 7) “besides, Paul the apostle writes and says the same thing: "Whisperers, backbiters… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Epistles* **Quote 11, page 6** not consumed by one another. I also beg you to keep away from abusive and insulting speech, for revilers do not attain the kingdom of God. And the tongue that… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 7) “the envenomed tongue of the devil, who from the beginning of the world, always deceitful and lying, lies that he may deceive, cajoles that he may injure, promises good that… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 7) “But in respect to certain discreditable and malignant things that are bandied about concerning him, I would not have you wonder when you know that this is always the work… [continues online] **read ›**

26 *Treatises* nor those who abuse themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor deceivers, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such indeed were you; but you… [continues online] **read ›**

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Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 27–31*

27 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 13, page 6** "not be ambitious, double-minded, or double-tongued. Let him not be quick to listen to slander or evil-speaking, not a hypocrite, not devoted to heathen festivals, not given… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 8) "whether they do not accuse out of ill-will or envy: for there are many that delight in mischief, forward in discourse, slanderous, haters of the brethren, making it their… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 8) "fears, disturbances, blots, evil-speaking, accusations, disorders, and doing the like works of the devil, as if he were ordained by the devil to cast a reproach on the Church… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 8) "prohibition of evil speaking and passion, of deceitful conduct, or idle words, lies, covetousness, and hypocrisy… [continues online] **read ›**

31 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 8) "mean blasphemies, evil-speaking, and if there be any other thing of the like nature… [continues online] **read ›**

Commodianus, *c. 250–300 AD · source 32*

32 *Writings* (1885 English) "mock him, or detract from your neighbour's reputation… [continues online] **read ›**

Archelaus, *c. 270–300 AD · source 33*

33 *Disputation with Manes* 1 with us, even when you were speaking against us and injuring us, and when you were speaking in detraction of the traditions of our fathers, and when your aim was… [continues online] **read ›**

Arnobius, *c. 290–330 AD · source 34*

34 *Against the Heathen* 1 (1885 English) "matters believed on calumnious reports not proved by any certain evidence… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *sources 35–37*

35 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quotes 3, 4, 6, pages 3, 4** us all unrighteousness and iniquity, along with all covetousness, strife, evil practices, deceit, whispering, and evil-speaking, all hatred of God, pride and arrogance, vanity and ambition. For those who… [continues online] **read ›**

36 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quote 5, page 3** "us clothe ourselves with concord and humility, ever exercising self-control, standing far off from all whispering and evil-speaking, being justified by our works, and not our words… [continues online] **read ›**

37 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** "thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *76 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

38 **Leviticus 19:11** You shall not steal; you shall not lie; nor shall anyone falsely accuse his neighbor. **read ›**

39 **Leviticus 19:16** You shall not go about with deceit among your nation; you shall not rise up against the blood of your neighbor. I am the Lord your God. **read ›**

40 **Numbers 14:27** "How long must I bear with this evil congregation? I have heard what they grumble before me, the grumbling of the children of Israel which they have grumbled concerning you. **read ›**

41 **Psalms 15:3** who has not deceived with his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbor, nor taken up an insult against those nearest to him; (Septuagint Psalm 14:3 (Psalm 15:3 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

42 **Psalms 36:4** He devised iniquity on his bed; he set himself on every way that is not good, and he did not loathe evil. (Septuagint Psalm 35:5 (Psalm 36:4 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

43 **Psalms 41:7** All my enemies whispered against me; against me they devised evil for me. (Septuagint Psalm 40:8 (Psalm 41:7 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

44 **Psalms 50:20** You sat and spoke against your brother, and you set a stumbling block before your mother's son. (Septuagint Psalm 49:20 (Psalm 50:20 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

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45 **Psalms 56:5** All the day long they detested my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil. (Septuagint Psalm 55:6 (Psalm 56:5 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

46 **Psalms 139:20** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

47 **Proverbs 6:19** An unrighteous witness kindles lies, and sends disputes between brothers. **read ›**

48 **Proverbs 10:18** Righteous lips cover hostility, but those who utter abuse are most foolish. **read ›**

49 **Proverbs 11:11** but by the mouths of the ungodly it is torn down. **read ›**

50 **Proverbs 11:13** A double-tongued man reveals counsels in the council, but he who is faithful in spirit hides matters. **read ›**

51 **Proverbs 16:17** The paths of life turn aside from evil, and the ways of righteousness are length of life. He who receives instruction will be among good things, and he who keeps correction will be made wise. He who keeps his own ways guards his own soul, and he who loves his life will spare his mouth. **read ›**

52 **Proverbs 16:28** A crooked man sends out evils, and will light a torch of deceit with evils, and he separates friends. **read ›**

53 **Proverbs 16:30** And he who fixes his eyes devises perverse things, and marks out all evils with his lips; he is a furnace of wickedness. **read ›**

54 **Proverbs 17:4** A bad man listens to the tongue of the lawless, but a righteous man does not pay attention to lying lips. **read ›**

55 **Proverbs 18:8** Fear casts down the lazy, and the souls of the unmanly will hunger. **read ›**

56 **Proverbs 20:19** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

57 **Proverbs 25:23** The north wind stirs up clouds, and a shameless face provokes the tongue. **read ›**

58 **Proverbs 26:22** The words of the cunning are soft, but they strike into the chambers of the inward parts. **read ›**

59 **Proverbs 26:26** He who hides hostility plots deceit, but, being easily known, he exposes his own sins in the councils. **read ›**

60 **Song of Solomon 3:2** I will rise now and go around the city, in the marketplaces and in the streets, and I will seek him whom my soul has loved. I sought him, and did not find him. **read ›**

61 **Jeremiah 11:3** and you shall say to them: Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Cursed is the man who will not listen to the words of this covenant, **read ›**

62 **Jeremiah 20:10** For I heard the blame of many gathering round about: “Conspire, and let us conspire against him”—all his friends. “Watch his intention, whether he will be deceived, and we will prevail against him and take our vengeance on him.” **read ›**

63 **Jeremiah 30:14** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

64 **Jeremiah 33:14** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

65 **Jeremiah 40:8** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

66 **Ezekiel 20:12** And I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them. **read ›**

67 **Daniel 2:12** Then the king in wrath and anger commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. **read ›**

68 **Daniel 2:14** Then Daniel answered Arioch with counsel and discretion—Arioch, the king’s chief cook, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon: **read ›**

69 **Daniel 11:13** And the king of the north shall return and bring a multitude greater than the first; and at the end of the times of years an invasion shall come with a great army and with many possessions. **read ›**

70 **Amos 1:10** And I will send forth a fire upon the walls of Tyre, and it shall devour its foundations. **read ›**

71 **Amos 1:11** Thus says the Lord: For three ungodly deeds of Idumea, and for four, I will not turn away from them, because they pursued their brother with the sword, and he destroyed the mother upon the earth, and seized his trembling for a testimony, and kept his onrush forever. **read ›**

72 **Amos 4:12** Therefore I will do this to you, O Israel; but because I will do this to you, prepare to call upon your God, O Israel. **read ›**

73 **Micah 5:10** And it shall be in that day, says the Lord, that I will utterly destroy the horses from your midst, and I will destroy your chariots; (Septuagint Micah 5:9 (Micah 5:10 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

74 **Nahum 3:2** The sound of whips, and the sound of rattling wheels, and of the pursuing horse, and of the bounding chariot, **read ›**

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75 **Zechariah 1:11** And they answered the angel of the Lord who stood between the mountains, and said, “We have gone through all the earth, and behold, all the earth is inhabited and is at rest.” **read ›**

76 **Wisdom of Solomon 1:10** For a jealous ear hears all things, and the muttering of complaints is not hidden. **read ›**

77 **Wisdom of Solomon 1:11** Beware, then, of useless grumbling, and keep your tongue from slander; for no secret word goes out empty, and a lying mouth slays the soul. **read ›**

78 **Wisdom of Solomon 4:12** For the evil eye of worthlessness obscures what is good, and the roving of desire perverts an innocent mind. **read ›**

79 **Wisdom of Solomon 14:26** disturbance of the good, forgetfulness of favors, defilement of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery, and shameless conduct. **read ›**

80 **Wisdom of Sirach 3:24** For their own assumption has led many astray, and evil suspicion has made their minds slip. **read ›**

81 **Wisdom of Sirach 5:14** Do not be called a gossip, and do not lie in ambush with your tongue; for shame is upon the thief, and an evil condemnation upon the double-tongued. **read ›**

82 **Wisdom of Sirach 9:18** A talkative man is feared in his city, and he who is rash in his speech will be hated. **read ›**

83 **Wisdom of Sirach 11:31** For he lies in wait, turning good things into evil, and on choice things he will lay blame. **read ›**

84 **Wisdom of Sirach 11:33** Beware of an evildoer, for he devises evil things, lest he give you a lasting blemish. **read ›**

85 **Wisdom of Sirach 12:16** The enemy will speak sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he will plan to throw you down into a pit; the enemy will weep with his eyes, but if he finds an opportunity, he will not be satisfied with blood. **read ›**

86 **Wisdom of Sirach 19:15** Question a friend, for slander often happens; and do not believe every word. **read ›**

87 **Wisdom of Sirach 19:16** There is one who slips, but not from the soul; and who has not sinned with his tongue? **read ›**

88 **Wisdom of Sirach 19:26** There is one who does evil, bowed down in gloom, but inwardly he is full of deceit, **read ›**

89 **Wisdom of Sirach 21:25** The lips of strangers will be weighed down by these things, but the words of those of sound judgment will be weighed on the scale. **read ›**

90 **Wisdom of Sirach 21:28** The gossip defiles his own soul, and will be hated where he lives. **read ›**

91 **Wisdom of Sirach 26:6** A wife jealous of another wife is grief of heart and mourning, and a lash of the tongue that communicates with all. **read ›**

92 **Wisdom of Sirach 27:15** The fighting of the proud is bloodshed, and their abuse of one another is painful to hear. **read ›**

93 **Wisdom of Sirach 27:22** He who winks with the eye devises evil, and no one will turn him away from it. **read ›**

94 **Wisdom of Sirach 27:23** Before your eyes he will make your mouth sweet, and he will marvel at your words; but afterward he will twist his mouth, and set a stumbling block in your words. **read ›**

95 **Wisdom of Sirach 28:9** And a sinful man will trouble friends, and he casts slander among those who are at peace. **read ›**

96 **Wisdom of Sirach 28:13** Curse the gossip and the double-tongued, for they have destroyed many who were at peace. **read ›**

97 **Wisdom of Sirach 28:14** A third tongue has shaken many, and driven them from nation to nation; it has pulled down strong cities, and overthrown the houses of nobles. **read ›**

98 **Wisdom of Sirach 28:15** A third tongue has driven out courageous women, and deprived them of their labors. **read ›**

99 **Wisdom of Sirach 37:3** O evil thought, from where did you roll in to cover the dry land with deceit? **read ›**

100 **Wisdom of Sirach 51:5** from the depth of the belly of Hades, from an unclean tongue and a lying word— **read ›**

101 **1 Maccabees 11:11** Ptolemy found fault with Alexander because he coveted Alexander’s kingdom. **read ›**

102 **1 Maccabees 16:17** So he committed a great act of treachery and repaid evil for good. **read ›**

103 **2 Maccabees 6:29** Those who were leading him changed the goodwill they had shown him a little before into ill will, because the words he had just spoken were, as they thought, madness. **read ›**

104 **3 Maccabees 2:26** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

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105 **Mark 7:22** thefts, greed, wickedness, deceit, unrestrained vice, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. **read ›**

106 **Luke 11:54** lying in wait for him, and seeking to catch him in something he might say, that they might accuse him. **read ›**

107 **Romans 1:29** being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness; secret slanderers, **read ›**

108 **Romans 1:30** backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **read ›**

109 **Romans 9:4** who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service, and the promises; **read ›**

110 **Romans 9:7** Nor are they all children because they are Abraham's seed. But, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." **read ›**

111 **1 Timothy 5:13** At the same time they also learn to be idle, going from house to house; and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. **read ›**

112 **1 Peter 2:1** Putting away therefore all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speaking, **read ›**

113 **Jude 1:16** These are grumblers and complainers, walking according to their own lusts; their mouth speaks boastful things, flattering people for gain. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *108 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Job 11:2

Psalms 2:7 · 34:11 · 34:14 · 50:16 · 50:18 · 69:28 · 133:1

Proverbs 1:33 · 3:34 · 10:19 · 27:2

Ecclesiastes 12:12

Ezekiel 2:10

Matthew 5:19 · 5:34 · 5:42 · 6:12 · 7:9 · 8:4 · 10:28 · 12:37 · 12:47 · 15:11 · 15:24 · 16:16 · 18:3 · 21:23 · 21:31 · 22:42 · 25:41 · 27:52

Mark 9:23 · 12:29

Luke 6:30 · 6:37 · 21:14 · 22:31

John 1:3 · 1:18 · 2:3 · 3:13 · 5:25 · 5:39 · 5:46 · 8:12 · 8:44 · 10:16 · 12:25 · 12:28 · 13:2 · 14:6

Acts 2:30 · 3:14 · 8:30 · 9:20 · 20:7

Romans 1:26 · 1:32 · 2:4 · 2:14 · 2:16 · 3:15 · 7:18 · 12:8 · 12:9 · 13:14

1 Corinthians 1:23 · 2:15 · 5:11 · 6:9 · 6:11 · 9:23 · 10:5 · 10:31 · 12:4 · 14:13 · 15:13 · 15:44 · 15:53

2 Corinthians 6:14

Galatians 2:12 · 5:10 · 5:19 · 6:1

Ephesians 2:14 · 2:20 · 4:8 · 5:6 · 5:25 · 6:12

Philippians 3:15

1 Timothy 2:4 · 3:4

2 Timothy 3:3

Titus 3:2

Hebrews 1:1 · 13:17

James 4:6

1 Peter 4:3 · 4:6 · 5:5

1 John 2:3 · 5:1 · 5:6

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2 John 1:10

Revelation 3:21 · 5:1

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “How did the early church describe backbiting, slander, gossip and whispering?” on April 12, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

Library only. This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed above, with a link to read it.

How it was made. Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.

How to cite this study. The Historic Faith, “How did the early church describe backbiting, slander, gossip and whispering?” Early Church Questions, published November 9, 2026, https://thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/how-did-the-early-church-describe-backbiting-slander-gossip-and-whispering. To cite one quotation, add its number and source, for example “quote 1, source 3.”

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THE END OF THIS STUDY