

# **I Heard It Through the Grapevine**

This is a song title of a good oldie from Motown Records (for those who know who Motown is). It was a song first recorded in 1966 for Gladys Knight and the Pips and later recorded by other artists such as Marvin Gaye and Creedence Clearwater Revival. This was back in the days when you could understand lyrics and the music was rhythmic, entertainers would dress to the “nines” and their backup singers would be dressed alike, dancing in sync to the songs. A far cry and maybe laughable by today’s standards of comparison, where most artists look like they fell into a box of staples or crashed a truck through a paint store.

In summary, the song is about a guy who loses his girlfriend to another and he finds out, not by her telling him the truth, but...” he heard it through the grapevine.” Additional terms for “grapevine” are; scuttlebutt, rumor mill, what’s the word, what’s the buzz or even “the 4-1-1.”

The circulation of rumors is prevalent everywhere. The best places for a dose of gossip and “catching up” on current affairs is the break room, the water cooler or in my case (when I was a cop) in the Squad Room. Information leaked from one source in another district was blown out of proportion by the time it reached us in another district. All too often, what started out as decent was watered down and

edited for content. Sometimes in an effort to discredit someone or a procedure. Shooting off your mouth without having your brain loaded is a plague upon our society.

This kind of mirrors what has happened to the Word of God and His truth in the past 2000 years. We have often mentioned “whisper down the lane” played at birthday parties years ago. Changes, edits, re-writes to fit doctrine have been evident and widespread as we have nearly 30,000 variations of Christianity. If the narrative does not fit the agenda, change the narrative, fill the pews and the collection plates, the heck with the truth.

I have been thinking about how we are all bombarded with lies and gossip at just about every turn. Satan is having a heyday and lies are so blatant anymore, nobody tries to hide them. TV shows, ads and politicians are simply chock full of crap that if anyone told the truth, their heads would fall off.

Since I usually begin with a clear definition of terms, we will start with the definition of Gossip. In short, gossip is defined by the Free Dictionary as: Casual and idle chat: to have gossip with a friend or conversation involving malicious chatter or rumors about other people.

How many of us can name a person or two who fit this description? Maybe even ourselves before repentance and baptism?

The Free Dictionary defines rumor as: a piece of unverified information of uncertain origin, usually spread by word of mouth. Unverified information received from another, hearsay. To spread or tell by rumor.

Any person of good character knows this type of behavior is not a productive quality. But if you take a close look at any of the garbage broadcast on TV these days, nearly everything is based on lies and deception. What is not based on lies is based on some other perversion or amoral concept. We could boast on how TV was “better” when we were growing up. But was it really?

“Father Knows Best, Ozzie and Harriet” and even the “Lucy Show”, while all seemed to have moral fiber, they all pretty much established that humor could be found in lying and deceitful situations. Albeit, they would admit their wrongs and lessons learned by shows end, the desensitizing and erosion was under way. These were not the first to chisel at the foundations of truth and decency as Disney and kids shows had begun to pollute young minds with magic and witchcraft with “Fantasia” and “The Wizard of Oz” long before that. Satan has not slept since giving Eve the apple. He loves lies and deceit as he is the “father of all lies.” (**John 8:44**)

In his essay, the late John Reid told of how his initiating a rumor snowballed into a fiasco when he was in the Korean War. One that could have cost lives. I have seen

old posters from WWII with a slogan, “Loose lips, sink ships.” It was referring to blabbermouths and people talking about things they should not. Boasting on a family member who was in the military probably was at the root of some comments but others who may have wanted a little self-elevation or notoriety might just say something out of line. Words are and have always been quite powerful. How powerful are these words, “And God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light.”- **Genesis 1:3**. Or how about, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”- **Luke 23:34**

Our words too are so very powerful we often do not realize just how hurtful they can be. I am blessed to have a wife whom is patient and forgiving or otherwise she would have smothered me in my sleep long ago!

**James 3:8-10**- “But the tongue no human being is able to tame; *it is* an unrestrainable evil, full of death-dealing poison. With it we bless God *the* Father, and with it we ourselves curse people who are made in *the* likeness of God. From the same mouth comes out blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so!” It is so critical that when we speak, we speak the truth. That we do not offer ourselves into situations of gossip or a feeding frenzy over rumors. God’s Word is most powerful when it is wielded by His faithful.

**Proverbs 18:21-** “Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit of it.”

**Hebrews 4:12-** “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.”

We now have “social media” platforms where anyone can post anything and be anyone. Some of the current “dating” shows on TV are so mindless, I am amazed that anyone with an IQ above frost actually tunes in. Heartbroken geeks are crushed when they find out the internet love of their life is actually a prize winner in the bovine contest at a county fair. Lies, lies, lies! They post photos of a model and they turn out uglier than a mud fence.

It seems like gossip, telling lies, and starting rumors is socially acceptable. With no accountability on social media, nerds can be Spiderman. Anonymity opens the door to all manner of deception. Apparently, the liar receives a sense of pleasure or control from whatever lies are strewn. Motives can vary. A juicy tale can be so sweet to the tongue, yet as it spreads, it spreads a poison both to the hearer and to the deceiver. It will ultimately be harmful and destructive to those involved.

**Proverbs 26:22-25-** “The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Burning lips and a wicked heart *are like* a broken piece of pottery with silver dross. He who hates *and* disguises it with his lips stores up deceit within himself. When he makes his voice gracious, do not believe him, for *seven hateful things are in his heart.*” What are those seven things?

**Proverbs 6:16-19-** “*These six things the LORD hates; yea, seven* are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that plots wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to evil, *A false witness who speaks lies,* and he who sows discord among brethren.” When God hates something, pay close attention to stay away from it!

So, if anyone approaches you and says, “hey did you hear the latest about so and so?” Plug your ears and politely walk away.

**Psalms 101:5-** “Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, in secret I will cut him off; he who has a haughty look and a proud heart, I will not allow.” God is crystal clear on this. Take note of the “proud heart” as well.

Some actually believe that if they emphasize negative comments about someone else, they can somehow elevate their own character or status. Satan is quite clever at deception of this kind, especially with our young people. He will always have an

offer that is just too good to be true. You can bet *it is* too good to be true. Sadly, so many fall for his sales pitch without ever reading the fine print. Satan will use whatever enticing action he can to lure young people away from remotely knowing God's Truth. Pay attention!

**1 Corinthians 15:33-34-** “Do not be deceived; *evil companionship corrupts good behavior*. Awake to righteousness, and do not sin, for some *of you* do not have the knowledge of God. I say *this* to your shame.”

Teaching our youth wisdom and discernment has given way to choices for gender identity and the re-writing of history. God has long since been removed from the classroom and entitlement and wants are a now considered a virtue. But wisdom and discernment are still available for *those who seek them*.

**Proverbs 1:2-4-** “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, righteousness, and judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young man.”

**Proverbs 2:10-15-** “Wisdom shall enter into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasing to your soul; Discretion shall preserve you and, understanding shall keep you, To deliver you from the way of the evil *man*, from the man who speaks wicked things, Those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the

ways of darkness, Who rejoice to do evil *and* delight in the perversities of the wicked, Whose ways *are* crooked, and *are* devious in their paths;”

**Proverbs 3:21-23-** “My son, do not let them depart from your eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion, And they shall be life to your soul and grace to your neck. Then you shall walk in your way safely, and your foot shall not stumble.”

**Proverbs 5:1-2-** “My son, attend to my wisdom; bow your ear to my understanding; That you may keep discretion, and that your lips may keep knowledge.”

**Proverbs 8:11-13-** “For wisdom *is* better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil; I hate pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the perverse mouth.”

Jesus warned us to be aware of false prophets who will deceive many. Some of our youths have witnessed the wiles and tactics of the enemy, his destructiveness and lies personally. Do not be deceived by anyone who remotely deviates from the Word of God with their own interpretation. God hates liars.

**Luke 21:8-** “And He said, “Beware that you be not deceived; for many shall come in My name, saying, ‘I am Christ;’ and, ‘The time has drawn near.’ Therefore, do not go after them.”



**Titus 1:8-11-** “But hospitable, a lover of good, sound minded, just, holy, self-controlled, Holding steadfastly to the faithful word, according to the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, so that he may be able both to encourage with sound doctrine and to convict those who are gainsayers. For there are many rebellious and vain talkers and deceivers, especially those from *the circumcision party*, Whose mouths must be stopped; who are subverting whole households, teaching things which *they* ought not, for the sake of selfish gain.”

God has some pretty strong words for being a false witness, a liar.

**Exodus 20:16-** “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

**Exodus 23:1-2-** “You shall not raise a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. You shall not follow a multitude to do evil. Neither shall you testify in a cause in order to side with many so as to pervert *judgment.*”

Maybe this why “hearsay” is inadmissible in court? Jumping on the “band wagon” when rumors are flying is commonplace too. Everyone wants to add their “two cents” whether it be factual or not. Inflaming the outcome for whatever motive they might have.

**Leviticus 19:16-** “You shall not go *as* a slanderer among your people; you shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. *I am* the LORD.”

**Deuteronomy 5:20-** “And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Even Jesus repeats you shall not bear false witness. **Matthew 19:18-** “Then he said to Him, “Which?” And Jesus said,” ‘You shall not commit murder’; ‘You shall not commit adultery’; ‘You shall not steal’; ‘You shall not bear false witness’;”

Even when Moses was up on Mount Sinai with God, the people rebelled and started rumors as to “what has become of Moses?” and demanded Aaron make them a golden calf, even after *all* they had witnessed in their exodus from captivity in Egypt. The rumors caused them to doubt Moses and far worse, to doubt God. That did not end too well for about three thousand of the rebellious (**Exodus 32:28**).

Moses received the Commandments directly from The Lord on Mount Sinai. When God says something, we know we should listen. When He writes it with His Finger, we had better burn it into our hearts and minds. No eraser man can come up with will ever mar His Words written in stone.

Aside from the self-gratification some may receive from lies and rumors, fear, power, and control can be motivators as well. Can we relate to any such rumors or lies possibly used by those in authority in the past three years?

**Deuteronomy 32:28-29-** “For they *are* a nation without wisdom; neither is there any understanding in them. If they were wise, they would understand this; they would consider their latter end!”

People live in fear. It is no wonder it is so difficult for them to discern what is true and what is not when it comes from those in authority. When a President’s accomplishments include gender neutral bathrooms, we are in trouble. Perhaps a lack of wisdom and discernment are part of the problem.

The Godless live in fear by choice, we do not.

**2 Timothy 1:7-** “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of sound mindedness.”

Fear fed the hysteria. “Cooping” people up during the Covid “plan-demic” quarantine certainly gave folks time to be idle. Social distancing and masks were the props to perpetuate the fearmongering.

**1 Timothy 5:13-** “And besides this, they also learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and *they* not only *become* idle, but *they* also *become* talebearers and busybodies, speaking things *that* ought not *be spoken.*”

Having the wisdom and discernment of God’s Word and His Holy Spirit, provided guidance in “reading between the lines” and what was fact and what was scare tactics. Does anyone here know anyone who died as a result of the vaccine? This

truth may never be known. When Merriam-Webster changed the definition of vaccine to fit their narrative, it should have been a clear red flag warning to anyone not living in fear. RNA gene therapy is not a vaccine.

**Ephesians 5:15-17-** “So then, take heed that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.”

We know the enemy and he is working overtime as his end time draws near. We know the Word of God and His Word is truth. We are separated from the lies and rumors by discernment through His Holy Spirit.

**Psalms 119:160-** “Your word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever.”

**John 17:17-** “Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is the truth.”

Things will continue to spiral downward without a national repentance and getting right with our Creator (**2 Chronicles 7:14**). We, as His chosen can do our part to remain steadfast and walk in His ways, serving Him and one another.

**Colossians 1:23-** “If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, *and* which

was proclaimed in all the creation that *is* under heaven; of which I, Paul, became a servant.”

We must be vigilant in our conduct and example we set for those we serve and those around us, especially for our children and young adults.

**Psalm 34:13-14-** “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking guile.

Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” Amen.

BL-02/25/23

