

# The Lakeland Hills Leader

**Lakeland Hills Blvd church of Christ**

2510 Lakeland Hills Blvd  
Lakeland, FL 33805  
(863) 688-4336

**Schedule of Services**

*Sunday*

9:00 AM Bible Study  
9:50 AM Worship  
5:00 PM Worship

*Wednesday*

7:00 PM Bible Study

**Visit our Website:**

[www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com](http://www.lakelandhillschurchofchrist.com)

For Sermon & Class outlines, Bible Study Materials and Other Information.

**Visit our Facebook Page:**

[www.facebook.com/LakelandHillschurchofchrist](http://www.facebook.com/LakelandHillschurchofchrist) for events, information, and links to our YouTube Archives

**Visit us on YouTube:**

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**Elders**

Bob Marschall  
Leon Miller  
Larry Wisdom

**Deacons**

Bucky Day  
Sherman Johnson  
Michael Sadler  
David Williams

**Evangelist**

Kent Heaton

## Gossip and the Three Gates

By Kent Heaton

The most powerful weapon in the world is not a nuclear bomb, a fast airplane, mighty ship, indestructible tank, or secret weapon of mass destruction. It is not a very large instrument and in relation to other parts of its same unit, it is a little member. Yet, this little member has caused more wars, death, destruction, and unrest in more cases and times than any other thing in the world. Since the creation of man, the instrument created by God for good has been put to evil purposes with death as its final victory. This deadly foe is the tongue.

*For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring can yield both salt water and fresh. (James 3:2-12, NKJV)*

The tongue is a fire that destroys everything in its path when not used properly. One of the most insidious ways that the tongue is used is gossip. A gossip is a person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts, often untrue. The heart of a gossip is evil for they do not seek the good of the individual but the good of the evil news. Their heart is defiled with the ungodly love of talebearing. The wise man had much to say about those who bore tales in deceit (Proverbs 16:27-30; 11:9, 13; 6:19; 18:8; 20:3, 19; 10:18).

Gossips are busybodies and are evil people (2 Thessalonians 3:11-12). Paul wrote to Titus (Titus 3:1-2) and exhorted him to "speak evil of no one." In Ephesians 4:31, Paul describes it as "evil speaking." Peter told the saints if they had to suffer, suffer as a Christian and not as a "busybody in other people's matters" (1 Peter 4:15-16). How do you tell a gossip? They are not hard to find. Their mouths are always wide open! Consider the following taken from "The Arabian":

*THREE GATES — If you are tempted to reveal a tale to you someone has told about another, make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold. These narrow gates: First, "Is it true?" Then, "Is it needful?" In your mind give truthful answer. And the next is last and narrowest, "Is it kind?" And if to reach your lips at last it passes through these gateways three, then you may tell the tale, nor fear what the results of speech may be.*

David wrote in Psalm 15:1-3, “LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend.” Gossip is a sin. Repent. As someone once said, “No one can keep the gossipers from gossiping, but all of us can keep our ears from serving as garbage cans.”

**A Little More Regarding Gossip** — A young man went to an elderly man for advice. He had spread a tale about another that he had later learned was untrue. He asked how he could repair the damage. The old man told him to lay a fluffy chicken feather at the door of every house in town, then come back for more instructions. When the young man returned, the old man said, “Now go and retrieve each feather.” The boy objected that by now the wind would have scattered them and it would be impossible to recover them. The old man nodded in agreement and said, “So it is with your words. Like the feathers which the wind scattered, they have blown in every direction, and you can never recall them.” (author unknown)

**A Jamaican Proverb:** “Empty barrel mek di most noise,” i.e. an empty barrel makes the most noise — meaning that he who has the least to say will often say the most.

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