

# Content Summary and Outline

## Gossip

1

### Words Create Worlds

Words have a unique ability to create worlds. If you think back to the beginning of creation, everything came to be through God speaking. Not only do words create life, they also help us communicate complex ideas that can lead to cultivation of God's good creation.

However, words can also be used in negative ways that destroy life. When used incorrectly, words can dehumanize and discourage, which leads to the destruction of people's lives. Using language like this goes against God's design, so we must be intentional about the words that we use and their purpose. Are we using our language to build others up and speak life, or are we using it to bring death and destruction?

### Outline

#### Words Create Worlds

- God created the world using words.
- God created humanity
- What makes humanity unique?
- Story of The Tower of Babel

#### Words destroy worlds

- Misplaced conviction
- Death and life in power of the tongue
- Holocaust story
- Words dehumanize and destroy lives

2

### Labeling and Negating

Whenever we think about gossip, one of the first things that we need to address is labeling. Labeling others is not as innocent as it looks. When we stereotype others, there usually is a motivation behind it to exhibit control. A label confines a person to given parameters of an archetype. This is blatant rebellion against God and His people.

We talk about people behind their backs and in turn, gossip. Negative words are said and ultimately, people are left feeling terrible and hurt. However, as followers of Christ we want to truly flourish, which means there is no room for gossip.

### Outline

#### What is labeling?

- "Once you label me, you negate me." - Kierkegaard
- Stereotyping others
- Labels gives control over others
- Propaganda (dehumanizing of others)

#### What is Gossip?

- Personal propaganda
- Slander vs. Gossip
- Gossip = whisper
- It takes 2 to tango
- Litmus test

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3

### Gossip & Significance

There are many reasons we gossip, but the most common is our own insecurity. Gossip is one way we can try to satisfy our desire for significance, to be important in the eyes of others. The fastest way to elevate ourselves is by pushing other people down, but this is not sustainable.

As a result of the fall, humans naturally seek to build their significance on something other than God, but this only leads to a never-ending cycle of comparison, competition and self-justification. Yet, when we accept God's love, we are moved to live in humility and experience true, lasting significance. Ultimately, if we reject God's love for us and seek out fulfillment elsewhere, we are being prideful, and we may seek to affirm our insecurities through technology and social media.

### Outline

#### Search for Significance

- We gossip because we are insecure.
- Advertisements and comparison.
- We want to matter to others
- Bullying elevates us temporarily

#### The Foundation of Significance

- Comparison, competition, and self-justification
- Pride and rejecting God's love
- Acceptance, humility, and true significance

#### Technology's Part

- It can affirm our insecurities
- Inability to experience empathy
- The dangers of anonymity

4

### Gossip & Rehab

Gossip can lead us to a place of destruction and pain, and as with habitual sin, it requires some sort of rehabilitation. There are a number of ways that we can go about this, but all routes come back to the words you use. As we said in the beginning, words create worlds. So are we creating worlds of pain that come from gossip, or are we creating worlds that build others up and encouraging?

When we learn to have empathy for others, our relationships improve along with our communication. We need to follow God's example and use our words accordingly. So are we practicing gossip or are we practicing gratitude? After all, the opposite of gossip is gratitude.

### Outline

#### Victim perspective

- Forgive those who gossip against us, even if they don't apologize first.
- Forgive and love: Don't seek revenge

#### Victimizers

- 2 Types (Gossip, listener)
- Leave & Reconcile
- Observation, Explanation, Interpretation
- Relationships -> communication -> Empathy

#### Opposite of gossip?

- Gratitude

# Conversation One | Gossip & Culture

## Words Have Power



### Start Here!

Words are not neutral - they have the ability to create and destroy. They are either building others up, or they are tearing others down. It is easy today to say things to people online that we normally wouldn't say to their face. Sometimes it's difficult for us to realize the power of language.



### Watch Video ...

The movie *Arrival* depicts the power of language. The survival or destruction of the world hinges on whether or not Louise Banks, a world renowned linguist, can communicate with the aliens:  
[bit.ly/2bvdUW4](http://bit.ly/2bvdUW4)



### Talk About It ...

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." Do you agree with this or not?



### Ephesians 4:29

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."



### Watch Video ...

Demi Lovato was bullied in school and cyber-bullied. Because of it she experienced low self-esteem, developed an eating disorder, and engaged in other methods of self harm. Now, she advocates against bullying and encourages those who see it taking place to step in: [bit.ly/2noP40i](http://bit.ly/2noP40i)



### Be Vulnerable

Talk about a time in your life where someone said something either to your face or behind your back that really hurt you.

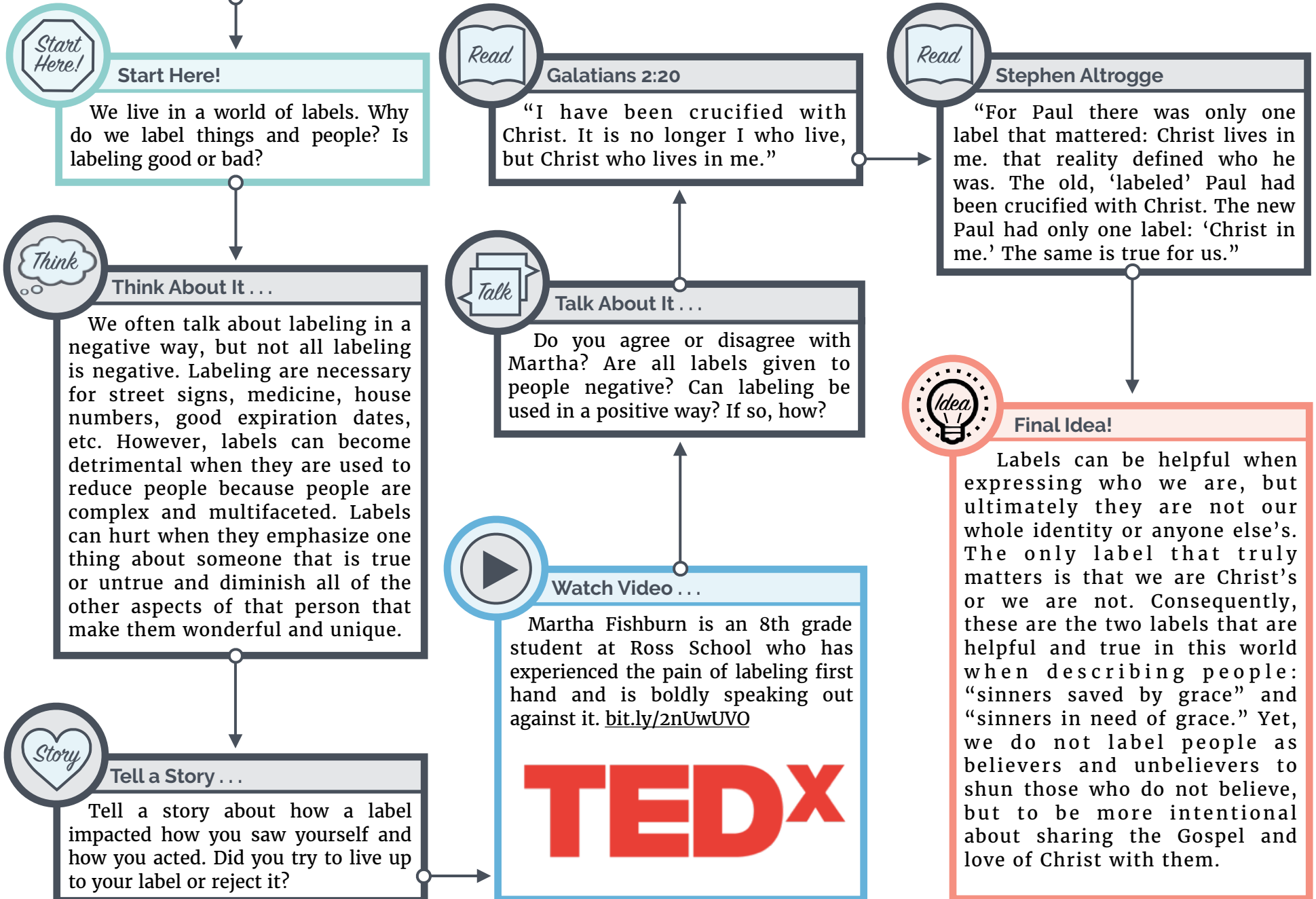


### Final Idea!

Gossip and harsh word often come from selfishness. It is easy to put others down to feel better about ourselves for a moment. However, God calls us to a higher standard. We are to live in love, saying only what is helpful for others. This is not a suggestion, but a command, and one day "everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken" (Matthew 12:36). We must choose our words wisely because by them we will either invoke life or death.

# Conversation Two | Gossip & Culture

## The Good & Bad of Labeling



# Conversation Three | Gossip & Significance

## DUFF or Beloved?



### Start Here!

Gossip and bullying are prevalent in many schools today and were once relegated only to the halls and classroom. Now, they are possible 24/7 through the use of smartphones and social media. Watch Bianca experience this reality when the student body labeled her the “DUFF” - designated ugly fat friend. <http://bit.ly/2nwopQI>



### Final Idea!

With social media and the viewing of around 3,000 advertisements per day, it is easier than ever to compare ourselves to highlight reels or unrealistic portrayals of others. We must choose to fight against comparison and for contentment in Christ. Jesus, God himself, loved us enough to sacrifice Himself for our ransom. When we stop focusing on what other people have and instead focus on our beloved status, and all we do have in Christ, we will be motivated by love and a feeling of profound significance.



### Think About It . . .

We gossip because of an unmet desire to be significant, to matter to others. When we do not find the validation we need in God, we may try to find it in our technology.



### Talk About It . . .

Have you or anyone you know ever tried to find significance via social media? What did that look like? Have you ever struggled to compare yourself to others on social media?



### Tell a Story . . .

Was there a time in your life that you were trying to both follow god and please others? How did it work out?



### Theodore Roosevelt

“Comparison is the thief of Joy.”



### Think About It . . .

When we compare ourselves to others, we only lose. We lose because we were not created to be like or walk the same path as the person we are comparing ourselves to. We are responsible for enjoying and obeying God, and comparing ourselves with others only gets in the way of that.



### Galatians 1:10

“For am I now seeking the favor of me, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”



### Marcus Aurelius

“How much time he gains who does not look to see what his neighbor says or does or thinks, but only at what he does himself, to make it just and Holy.”

# Conversation Four | Gossip & Conflict

## Rehab

