

## **From Pastor Ed: The 21 Day Wesley Challenge**

This is day 17! Way to Go!!

After worship we will have our second OT session!

### **Day Seventeen Question Seventeen**

Do I confidentially pass on to others what was told to me in confidence?

Proverbs 11:11-13, Daniel 6:3-4

We know that trust is fundamental to establishing and sustaining strong relationships. So why do we feel the need to break trust by sharing matters told to us in confidence? Usually we feel the urge to relay private information because information is power. Humans love to let others know that we have access to powerful information. But when as Christians we cannot keep secrets or hold confidential matters private, we sabotage the very sense of community Jesus came to create.

- Has anyone ever betrayed your confidence? What happened after you discovered that your trust was broken? How did that experience affect that specific relationship, other relationships (especially if they were touched by the information wrongly shared), and your overall willingness and ability to trust others?
- Have you ever betrayed someone's confidence? What were the circumstances? If you have ever betrayed someone's confidence, how did you feel after you shared that person's confidential information? Are you still in a relationship with that person? Why or why not? If you have never betrayed someone's confidence, how was this principle of trust instilled in you?

**Prayer:** Help me, God, to control my desire to reveal information that was told to me in confidence. Guard my tongue, and help me to think before I speak and act. Amen.

### **Day 17 devotional 17: (thanks to Chuck Swindoll)**

Can you keep a secret?

*Can* you? Be honest, now. When privileged information passes through one of the gates of your senses, does it remain within the walls of your mind? Or is it only a matter of time before a leak occurs? When the grapevine requests your attention from time to time, do you refuse to help it climb higher, or do you encourage its rapid growth, fertilizing it by your wagging, unguarded tongue? When someone says, "Now this is confidential," do you respect their trust or ignore it . . . either instantly or ultimately?

The longer I live, the more I realize the scarcity of people who can be fully trusted with confidential information. The longer I live, the more I value those rare souls who fall into that

category! As a matter of fact, if I were asked to list the essential characteristics that should be found in any member of a church staff or officer on a church board . . . the ability to maintain confidences would rank very near the top. No leader deserves the respect of the people if he or she cannot restrain information that is shared in private.

Our minds might be compared to a cemetery, filled with graves that refuse to be opened. The information, no matter how juicy or dry, must rest in peace in its coffin, sealed in silence beneath the epitaph "Shared in confidence—Kept in confidence."

You and I wouldn't give a plugged nickel for a doctor who ran off at the mouth. The same applies to a minister or an attorney or a counselor or a judge or a teacher or a secretary . . . or a close, trusted friend for that matter. No business ever grows and remains strong unless those in leadership are people of confidence. No school maintains public respect without an administration and faculty committed to the mutual guarding of one another's worlds. When leaks occur, it is often a sign of character weakness, and action is usually taken to discover the person who has allowed his or her mental coffin to be exhumed and examined.

Information is powerful. The person who receives it and dispenses it bit by bit often does it so that others might be impressed because he or she is "in the know." Few things are more satisfying to the old ego than having others stare wide-eyed, drop open the jaw, and say, "My, I didn't know that!" or "Why, that's hard to believe!" or "How in the world did you find that out?"

Solomon writes strong and wise words concerning this subject in Proverbs. Listen to his counsel:

Wise men store up knowledge,  
But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand. (10:14)

When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable,  
But he who restrains his lips is wise. (10:19)

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets,  
But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. (11:13)

The one who guards his mouth preserves his life;  
The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. (13:3)

He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets,  
Therefore do not associate with a gossip. (20:19)

Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot  
Is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble.

Like a city that is broken into and without walls  
Is a man who has no control over his spirit. (25:28)

From now on, let's establish four practical ground rules:

1. Whatever you're told in confidence, *do not repeat*.
2. Whenever you're tempted to talk, *do not yield*.
3. Whenever you're discussing people, *do not gossip*.
4. However you're prone to disagree, *do not slander*.

Honestly now, can you keep a secret? Prove it.

***What you're told in confidence, don't repeat. When discussing people, don't gossip.***

— Charles R. Swindoll