



How things fit together in the Kingdom

Mind Your Own Business

A few years after I was baptized in the Holy Spirit I was given the responsibility of teaching a group of people in a house church we started. I waited on the Spirit to guide me in what I was to speak on each week, so I wasn't at all surprised when he had me teach on this topic at the very beginning of our formation. It is from that time back in the 1980s that this material originates.

The majority of believers can't see anything wrong with not minding your own business. After all, they say, "No one really cares". They have that attitude because they've taken on the ways of the world system through the unconscious programming of family, friends and society. Let's see if we should care about it.

Stop Being a Busybody

Paul negatively describes some of the believers in Greek as busybodies.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 (NKJV) – *For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.*

The word 'busybody' here is the translation of the Greek word *periérgazomai*¹ (περιεργάζομαι) into English. Here's information about it from dictionaries of Greek NT words:

- *Literally 'to be working round about, instead of at one's own business'. From *peri*, 'around' and *ergon* 'work'. Signifies 'to take more pains than enough about a thing' or 'to waste one's labour'. Alternatively, 'to be meddling with' or 'bustling about' other people's matters.²*
- *To 'bustle about uselessly', 'to busy one's self about trifling, needless or useless matters'. Used apparently of a person officiously inquisitive about other's affairs.³*
- *The adjective is *periérgos*⁴ (περίργος), literally meaning 'things that are around work'. Used referring to 'being taken up with trifles' or 'things which are superfluous'. It is also used of magic artsⁱⁱ, where people pry into forbidden things, with the aid of evil spirits. Also used of 'busybodies'ⁱⁱⁱ – i.e. 'prying' or meddling in other persons' affairs because they are curious/inquisitive.⁵*

The expression in Thessalonians (above) may be freely rendered as: "some who are not busied⁶ in their own business, but are overbusied⁷ in that of others"⁸.

CONCLUSION: It's clear then, from what Paul wrote, that being a busybody is not a behaviour for us. We should only be focusing on our lives and our responsibilities, if we read Paul properly.

1 – Strong's G4020

2 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words [public domain] www.studyLight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/b/busybody.html

3 – Thayer's Greek Lexicon www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G4020/periergazomai.htm

4 – Strong's G4021

5 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words [public domain] www.studyLight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/b/busybody.html AND www.studyLight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/c/curious.html

6 – Fully and actively occupied. Not passive.

7 – More busied than is required.

8 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words [public domain] www.studyLight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/b/busybody.html

Stop Meddling in Other's Affairs

There's a crossover in the translation of Greek words into English where the same word can be rendered as 'busybody' or 'meddler'. Both *periérgazomai* and *periérgos* (above), fit into this category.

However, there's a difference between these two words in our culture.

- A 'busybody' is inquisitive, a 'sticky-beak' into other people's lives – This is exemplified in reality TV shows where viewers are enthralled by the 'goings on'⁹ of people in live situations.
- A 'meddler', on the other hand, interferes with the lives of other people where they have no jurisdiction to do so – This is exemplified by the critical mother-in-law who wreaks havoc in her married children's lives because they're always telling them what to do and how they should deal with their problems. That's an extreme example, but you get the picture.

Paul writes about meddlers here:

1 Timothy 5:13 (AMP¹⁰) – *Now at the same time, they also learn to be idle as they go from house to house; and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies [meddlers in things that do not concern them], talking about things they should not mention.*

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 (AMP) – *For even while we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat,¹¹ either. Indeed, we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined and inappropriate life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies [meddling in other people's business].*

In these two passages, Paul uses *periérgos* and *periérgazomai*. Both of these are covered in the previous section.

CONCLUSION: It's clear, then, from what Paul wrote, that meddlers, like busybodies, are lazy and don't deserve to be supported in a Kingdom Community. Meddling, therefore, is not what we should be doing.

Stop Telling Others What To Do

1 Peter 4:15 (NKJV) – *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters.*

The word translated 'busybody' here is Greek word *állotriepískopos*¹² (*ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος*). It simply means: Being 'another person's overseer' without the authority to do so. Here's information about it from dictionaries of Greek words:

- *One who takes the supervision of affairs pertaining to others and 'in no wise'¹³ to himself. A meddler in other men's matters.*¹⁴
- *From *allos*, 'belonging to another person', and *episkopos* 'an overseer'. Translated 'busybody'¹⁵ in the NKJV, 'meddler' in the NIV, 'troublemaker' in the ISV and 'mischief-maker' in the RSV. It was a legal term for a charge brought against Christians as being hostile to civilized society. Their purpose being to make Gentiles conform to Christian standards. Some explain it as prying into others' affairs.*¹⁵

9 – Not just issues (problems), but includes every-day happenings and the mundane as well.

10 – The Amplified Bible

11 – i.e. if one is able, but unwilling to work to provide for himself or his family, it is unjust for him to receive the necessities of life provided free by those who willingly work. classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Thess+3%3A10-11&version=AMP#en-AMP-29689

12 – Strong's G244

13 – A way of doing or being; "in this wise" www.the-crossword-solver.com/word/wise

14 – Thayer's Greek Lexicon www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G244/allotriepiskopos.htm

15 – Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words [public domain] www.studylight.org/dictionaries/eng/ved/b/busybody.html

It's not our place to interest ourselves in controlling or impacting other people's lives UNLESS we have the authority to do so. For example: Parents have authority to oversee children, employers have authority to oversee employees, and teachers have authority to oversee students.

However, Paul states that we are not allowed to oversee others who are not under our approved supervision, even if we're a teacher, an employer or parent. Each of us is primarily responsible for ourselves, and we will stand before God on the Day of Judgement with that condition firmly in place.

So, remember: **Other people are responsible for their own lives, not us**

Some oversight-like actions we can undertake which are inappropriate when we are not authorised are:

1. Correcting those we don't have authority to correct
2. Commenting on what others are doing because we consider our way is right and theirs wrong
3. Pushing a 'barrow' to bring change in areas outside of sound doctrine
4. Coaching/correcting a teacher's doctrine without the courtesy to ask

The other side of the word *allotriepiskopos* is wanting to (or trying to) control society by demanding that it functions your way. Such is the activity of militant Christians, and also their counterparts who whinge about society around them. This is not on. Remember: *allotriepiskopos* was "a legal term for a charge brought against Christians as being hostile to civilized society, their purpose being to make Gentiles conform to Christian standards".

There's a fine line between correcting a fellow believer where they are in unrighteous error^v and speaking to them as if you're their overseer. We must discern and think before we speak, so we don't move into pseudo oversight, which is very easy to do.

We so easily assume the role of overseer of others because we do it in authorised situations in our normal lives, and we fail to check ourselves before we start inappropriately doing it elsewhere. This is part of what fits under what Paul calls 'disorderly conduct'^{vi}.

The same is true of confessing sins to one another.^{vii} Confession doesn't give the hearer the right to counsel the confessor unless it is asked for. We have the propensity to always want to advise others – some of us more than others. We can quickly speak 'pearls of wisdom' to others that don't want to hear it, just because we are too self-centred to consider the wishes of others and our roles in the Kingdom.

IMPORTANT: If we can't cease our pseudo overseeing, we can't successfully move in Kingdom authority because that authority requires self-control.

CONCLUSION: It's clear then, from what Paul wrote, that we are not to tell others what to do or to force them into our way of operating.

Stop Gossiping As Well

Gossips don't just like to listen to information, they also give it out. That's because they come in 2 types: those with 'itching ears' and those with 'loose lips'. Most gossips suffer from both symptoms because gossips feed off each other.

Here's Paul's instructions concerning gossiping:

2 Corinthians 12:20 (TPT¹⁶) – *Now I’m afraid that when I come to you I may find you different than I desire you to be, and you may find me different than you would like me to be. I don’t want to find you in disunity, with jealousy and angry outbursts, with selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance, and turmoil.*

1 Timothy 3:11 (NKJV) – *Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not [malicious gossips]¹⁷, temperate, faithful in all things.*

1 Timothy 5:13 (TPT) – *Those widows who go around from house to house as busybodies are only learning to be lazy, making their situation even worse by talking too much, gossiping, and speaking things they shouldn’t. They become far too obsessed with empty things that will not bear good fruit.*

Titus 2:3-4 (CEV¹⁸) – *Tell the older women to behave as those who love the Lord should. They must not gossip about others or be slaves of wine. They must teach what is proper, so the younger women will be loving wives and mothers.*

NOTE: It seems that gossips were mostly women, as in our day.

CONCLUSION: Paul directs that we must not gossip. Gossip then is an unfit behaviour for us, so it must be eliminated.

Incidentally, the same mindset that gossips have (spreading everyone’s business), exists in those who can’t keep secrets, who divulge personal information about others, who break another’s privacy, or who talk about things in other people’s lives that are actually private. These people were well described in a webinar I engaged in recently on “Fostering Ethics and Confidentiality”¹⁹. Here are some common examples of **breaches of confidentiality** from that educational experience:

- Discussing a person’s life situations or circumstances with others without the person’s authorization.
- Sharing a person’s life situation with one of their friends or a friend of their family without the person’s authorization.
- Discussing a person’s medical or care needs where unauthorized persons can hear what’s said.
- In a care situation, not getting a client’s signed consent before their personal information is shared.

 – “Stay in your Lane! Do not gossip, meddle, or comment on, matters considered ‘family business’.”²⁰

That’s quite clear, isn’t it. Of course, these are not scriptural, but it’s the tack taken in the Community Sector and Care Sector in Australia under our privacy legislation.

Some Solutions

Avoid gossips, busybodies and meddlers. Their speech habit is infectious.

Like Paul, teach others that these three are behaviours that sons must eliminate. Train and correct them, wherever you have a duty of leadership or oversight.

You can avoid being sucked into gossip sessions on the occasions when you’re stuck with them by simply saying, “That’s irrelevant”, when you hear them start to gossip. Walk away if they don’t cease and desist. Be prepared, though, to have them be affronted when you infer they need to stop talking about other’s private matters.

16 – The Passion Translation

17 – Slanderers

18 – Contemporary English Version

19 – EPEC Education

20 – © Property of EPEC Education & Dr Mary Anne Hall. Not to be redistributed for commercial purposes.



An afterthought: From now on, you know that being a busybody, meddling, gossiping, and telling others what to do are all unrighteous activities for sons. With that knowledge then, it's a sin²¹ for you to do any of them.^{viii} That's because you wouldn't be operating out of faith.^{ix}

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References are on the next page

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- ii – Acts 19:19
- iii – 1 Timothy 5:13
- iv – 1 Peter 4:15
- v – 1 John 5:16
- vi – 2 Corinthians 12:20
- vii – James 5:16
- viii – James 4:17
- ix – Romans 14:23