

Author Rosaria Butterfield says that being born with a sin nature is a little bit like inheriting a garden.

Let's say that you inherited an enchanting garden. And for 10 years, you just let it thrive. You let it do anything it wanted. You never pruned back the weeds. You never got rid of the pests. You never worked with the roses. You just let it quote-unquote "thrive."

And after 10 years, what is it? It's a disaster. It might even be way past the point of no return. And you go to a master gardener and you say, "Hey, this is not fair. I want my money back. I just did everything I could to let this garden thrive. I let it do exactly what it wanted." You know, the master gardener's going to laugh at you and say, "Buddy, gardens come with weeds! It's part of its nature and by failing to deal with that, you destroyed it."

As a believer in Christ... you have been born again and have new life... a life that is intended to flourish. But it came with weeds. You and I have a sin nature... which we must not ignore.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)

Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Even though this verse is not found in the passage for our study this morning (in Genesis)... it is going to serve as our key verse for the day. It summarizes (very well) the take-home part of today's message.

Today we come to the conclusion of the life of Noah... And let me tell you now... that it does not **end** well. ... We might actually prefer that this section of Genesis chapter nine was left out of Scripture... because it deals with the **fall** of Noah. (You see)... for three chapters we have seen so much to be impressed by... about Noah... and his character.

Throughout the *three chapters in Genesis*... which are record of Noah... (until now) he conducted himself with excellence. In spite of the wicked

times in which he lived... he walked a holy life... in complete obedience to the Lord. 2 Peter 2:5 says that Noah was a "preacher of righteousness." (He walked with God and proclaimed righteousness to such wicked people... that Genesis 6:5 says their thoughts and intentions of their heart was only evil – continually.) Just imagine the pressures he must have felt to give-in... and to be like everyone else.

But in today's passage... we are on the other side of the flood. ... And after such a merciful deliverance from the deluge... after witnessing such a solemn demonstration of God's holy wrath against sin... and after receiving a full provision of Divine assurance... (through a covenant with God)... Any reader might assume... as we come to today's passage... that we would see nothing but a strict **adherence** to the path of righteousness.

Instead... what we get... is how Warren Wiersbe phrased it. "*The history of Noah and his family now moves from rainbows to shadows.*" ...And we behold the shameful sins of a great man of faith.

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Genesis 9:18-29

Now... let me make just one comment about verse 18... before we get to the main parts of this narrative. It has to do with the parenthetical statement "(Ham was the father of Canaan.)"

Who is this Canaan? Why is his name mentioned and linked so closely with Ham? ... And then... the writer teases us again in verse 22: '*And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father...*'

Now most of you (no doubt) already know... Canaan is the father of the inhabitants of the land of promise... who will be dis-possessed by Israel... when God leads the Israelites out of Egypt. ... And who is the writer of Genesis... and where is he...? ... It is Moses... and they are on their way up from Egypt. (Moses is saying... "*Here is a little understanding about the people whose land God is about to give to us...*") It was encouraging for them to have this information about the people of Canaan that God was judging.

Genesis 9:19-21

The first point that I want to make from this... is that... here we discover striking evidence of the Divine inspiration of the scriptures. ... If the Bible was merely a human production... (if it had been written by uninspired historians)... the defects of its leading characters would have been ignored. (Or if they were recorded at all... we would expect to see an attempt at justifying the sin or the flaw of our hero.) ... But the fact that it *is* recorded and that no effort is made to *excuse* his sin... provides us with evidence that the characters of the Bible are painted in the colors of truth and... that this writing was not sketched by human design.

The second point that I want to make... is that the main thrust of this passage is not about the evils of drinking wine. (Notice that it is barely even mentioned. "*He drank wine and became drunk*" is all that is said.)

Now... the Scriptures... in other places **do** make it **their** point... and condemn drunkenness (such as several verses of Prov. Chapter 20; Isaiah 5:11; Hab. 2:15; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:10; and Eph 5:18.) ... So I am not going to preach sternly against drunkenness – as an evil... in this message. (If we were in any of those other passages... I would. ... But there is a different sin in our passage that is to be at the center of our disgust.

So let me just complete the thoughts about Noah's fall... that I have already begun. ... In Noah's sin... we learn *our* need of watchfulness and prayer. (LISTEN!)... A believer is never immune from falling. ... The evil nature is still within us... and nothing but constant dependency upon God... can enable us to withstand the enticements of the world... the flesh... and the devil.

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Neither age... nor character... is any **security** in the hour of testing. Here was a man who had withstood the temptations of an evil world for **six hundred** years... yet nevertheless... he now succumbs to the lusts of the flesh. ... So... let's not sit in judgment upon Noah... with some pharisaical complacency... (as though such a fall could **never** be part of our story.) Rather let us "*consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted*" (Galatians 6:1). No experience of God's mercies (or how He has used us) in the past... can deliver us from exposure to **new** temptations in the future. Please consider this **carefully**... as we move on now... to the sin that **is** front and center to our passage.

Genesis 9:22

OK... now here it *is!*

On the surface... Ham seeing his father naked and telling his brothers about it... seems rather harmless... and probably accidental. ... But it was neither.

The meaning of the word "saw" (here) is "to see by an act of the will..." A choosing to look. (So it wasn't accidental.) Another definition for the word is "to gaze with satisfaction." ... And the fact that it was an evil viewing... is confirmed by Noah's reaction... once he was sober. He cursed Ham's son (Canaan)... because of the wicked viewing by Ham.

Furthermore... Ham told his brothers and the word for "told" indicates he told with *delight*. ... Ham seems to have had a rebellious attitude against his father (who was his authority.) Rebellion against authority delights gossipers even more... doesn't it...? (When gossip happens to be against authority... it is the *juiciest* morsel gossipers can eat.) Ham was disrespectful of God-ordained authority. When he found fault or weakness with his father... he wanted everyone to know.

All of these things probably happened near the *end* of Noah's 950 year life. (Fathers normally pronounce blessings on their children close to the end of their life.) ... So if this did happen at least 300 years after the flood... the earth would have had a lot more people... than the 8... who dis-embarked from the Ark. (I mention this... because it is important to the next point that I want to make.)

The Hebrew word “outside” means “roadway.” ... Now this really condemns Ham. He did not tell his brother in private but in public — out on the roadway where others might hear.

Those who talk evilly... like to have a large audience. (They pretend that it is for your ears only... but this is usually a ruse. (Those who listen to gossip are made to think: “*Wow! I have been let-in... I am on the inside track of privileged information...*”) But gossipers really do not care who is listening... or who finds out.

Next... the context (here) implies that Ham told with the intent of getting his brothers to also look upon Noah and join him in his rebellion. This too... is typical of gossip. If it stirs up a hot contention... it delights the sinner even more.

But wait a minute...! Is this really gossip...? After-all - It was completely true! Noah was drunk and naked. Noah had indeed shamed himself. So does this make it OK... to be reported to others? (Often when a gossip is confronted with something like... “*that is gossip you are spreading...*” the response will be... “*No... It’s all true!*”) ... So please take careful note here that... even when it is TRUE... (Noah - was - drunk and naked) – gossip is still evil.

(And please take special notice... here) that our passage today presents gossip ... and stirring up contention against God-ordained authority... as worse than the actual true and shameful act of Noah... Drunkenness (and what it causes people to do) is reprehensible... However... Ham’s disrespect for someone that he should have respected... (Ham’s gossip

and contentious behavior)... completely overshadows Noah's drunkenness and its effects.

Ham... upon discovering the nakedness of Noah... sought **not** to cover it... but to **exploit** it. ... Ham demonstrated **no** sense of shame... for rebelling against his father... and trying to get his brothers to join him. (A person who gossips... has a calloused heart.) A heart without a rightful sense of shame... is a heart that is far from listening to God. ... And (LISTEN)... how people respond to the reports that they hear about someone else's sin (supposed... or **actual** sin that happened)... is an indication of **their** character.

Look at the character of those who heard gossip (Shem and Japheth)...

Genesis 9:23

Ham did not help here. He was not interested in covering Noah's nakedness... but only in dishonoring his authority. ... Shem and Japheth had a compassion for honoring their father and for holiness.

We need more Shems and Japheth's today! We need them in our government... in our schools... and... - in our **churches**. Because so many people only want to **perpetrate** evil - not stop it.

And notice (here) how correcting evil... requires diligence and **caution**... It is never an easy thing to do. ... Shem and Japheth walked backwards... and would not expose themselves to sin when they were in the process of correcting a sinful situation.

Love doesn't *cleanse* sin... (only the blood of Christ can do that)... nor does love *condone* sin... or turn a blind eye to it... because love wants God's very best for others. ... But love does **cover** sin... and doesn't go around reporting sin (supposed sin or otherwise) and encouraging others to spread the bad news. ... When people sin (and we know about it)... our task is to “cover sin.”

Proverbs 10:12 (ESV)

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.

Proverbs 17:9 (ESV)

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Gossip spreaders are the most **UNloving** people!

Our task is to stop gossip and to help restore the hurting in a spirit of humility... considering ourselves... because all of us are **candidates** for conduct that is unbecoming to a Christian.

Anyone here might be the drunkard or the gossip... We might be contentious... and all too happy to rebel against any kind of authority. ... And those who would recruit you to be one... are very clever... “*I’m coming to you because you are my friend... I’m telling you this because you are trustworthy... a mature believer... or a good person to ‘pray about it’...*” ... If they can flatter your ego... then they’ve got you! ... Don’t buy into that garbage! (And don’t assume flattery won’t work on you.)

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Genesis 9:24-27

There is a lot of great stuff here... that I could show you... for how this prophecy was fulfilled. It deals with the Canaanites continuing to rebel against God's ultimate authority... Shem's descendant (Abraham) starting the race of Hebrews... which had great cities... vineyards... and orchards built for them by the Canaanites (whose land they took over)... Japheth's descendants (which include the Medo-Persians... the Greeks... the Romans... and European nations... who would expand with political dominance... and later... as Christ followers... would be grafted into the tree of Israel's spiritual heritage.

But here is the simple point that I would like to make from this curse and blessings from Noah: Sin receives curses... but righteousness receives blessing! It pays to do right! ... The world will argue this... and perhaps some who are believers might want to minimize it. "*My gossiping is not that bad...*" ... But eternity will win the argument.

Genesis 9:28-29

Noah lived another three-and-a-half centuries... and we have every reason to believe that he walked with God and served Him faithfully. ... As far as the record is concerned... he fell once... and certainly if he repented... the Lord forgave him.

In our walk with God... we climb the hills and sometimes we descend into the valleys. ... "The victorious Christian life is a series of new beginnings."

Have you participated in gossip...? ... Have you gotten sucked into contention...? ... Perhaps God is calling you to a new beginning. ... Is God calling you to be a Shem and Japheth...?

The next time you hear gossip and contention... I pray that God brings this passage of Scripture to mind.

Whenever you hear gossip and contention... call it what it is! Be bold. Stand up! Stop protecting the gossiper. By protecting the gossiper and the contention-spreader... you become a participant with them... and allow them to continue sinning. ... So lovingly tell the gossiper that what they told you is gossip... that it is a sin... and that they need to ask forgiveness from the person they gossiped about. Then follow through. Call them in a week and ask if they have done it. If they haven't (and indicate that they have no intention to do so)... then let them know that this forces you to go to the other person and bring them to you... so that you will confess and ask their forgiveness.

This is what taking a Biblical stand against gossip and contention looks like. This is what being a Shem and Japheth... in our society looks like. ... How much gossip do you think there would be... if we all committed ourselves to stopping it...?

Eternity will win the argument. Don't miss the blessings!

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