



## No Growth - Rumors

Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

*Exodus 23:1*

**Reproach** - Psalm 109:25

**Unjust** - Proverbs 29:27

**Multitude** - Exodus 23:2

**Observant** - Isaiah 42:20

**Resentment** - Job 5:2

**Secret** - Psalms 17:12, Jeremiah 23:24

What is a rumor? **A story or statement in general circulation without confirmation or certainty as to facts. Rumors are known as fake news.** People who spread false information without inquiry are often either jealous or haters, or may even harbor both sentiments against the person in question. What is the difference between gossip and rumors? Gossip typically refers to informal news about the personal lives of others, often lacking verification. Rumors are unverified pieces of information or stories spread by a larger group of people, often lacking specific details.

For believers, those who serve God may encounter such situations because of whom they believe in and make a stand. On the other hand, saints of God should not participate in or spread such verbal activity among others. The first part of the theme verse for this topic comes from Exodus twenty-three, verse one, "Thou shalt not raise a false report." The last thing God wants His servants to do is to hurt another soul in this fashion. The goal for

believers is to lead people to God so He can save them, not to break them down verbally. Rumors can mislead others into believing something that can be devastating to the victim without them even knowing it. An example of how rumors can be detrimental to a person begins with Naboth's vineyard in First Kings twenty-one. Ahab offered Naboth money or another vineyard in exchange for the only one he had. However, Naboth replies that God forbid him to give it. Ahab, being sad about it, tells his wife incorrectly what happened, which led her to devise mischief against Naboth. The second part of the theme of this topic continues from Exodus twenty-three, verse one, "Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." In First Kings twenty-one, verse two, And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, "Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money." And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee, in verse three. *Rumors can cause an individual to find fault with another person.* In verse four, "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." When Jezebel, Ahab's wife, in the following verse five, "Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?" Ahab's response in verse six, "And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard."

**"Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers.** Ahab had within him the word that Naboth said, but left out, "The Lord forbid it me." When Ahab received the news that Naboth's God had blocked the offer, it made him unable to eat or sleep well.

Rumors cause people to behave in such a way that they purposely find fault to create more drama around the innocent or godly person, often masking their hate or jealousy. Ahab's behavior draws the attention of Jezebel, his wife, to question him.

*Rumors can be unfair toward that individual and generate falsehoods and other issues.*

Ahab in First Kings twenty-one, verse six, **"And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard."** Ahab did not say to his wife Jezebel, what Naboth replied, but only said it in an improper way, which caused more drama that led Naboth to get set up for danger. **"And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee,"** as in verse three of this theme chapter. That's all the servant of God said, and nothing else.

*Today, rumors get out of hand because those who initiate them have ill feelings against the person.* It does not have to be something big or significant. The fact that a person can't do or have what the other has is enough for the initiator to create and generate rumors about the person. The enemy will use that as fuel for the jealous one to do wrong to the individual with whom they have a conflict. These people will utter lies to bring down the innocent because they did it to Jesus Christ, and they will do it to believers who love, live, and serve God.

*Rumors begin with a group of people.* Ahab's wife, Jezebel, wrote letters in Ahab's name, as in the beginning of First Kings twenty-one, verse eight, and set two men to bear witness against Naboth in the following verse ten, then did this in the presence of the people in the middle of verse thirteen of the same chapter. The group then devises evil against one who did not know it was coming, making these rumors so dangerous and deadly. Two against one is bad. However, a group versus one gives no chance for the person to stand alone. To conspire against an innocent victim will be a life of regret.

*Rumors can make the evil-doers watchful.* The downside to being part of this scandal group may force people to be conscious of the individual they are plotting against. Ahab could have gotten any vineyard. However, in the middle of verse two, "I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money." Why didn't Ahab go and get the better vineyard? He watched this vineyard and the history of it, and who Naboth served was involved, which made Ahab so eager to possess it.

*Rumors can cause people to be in rage or resentment against the one intended.* "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil," as in Psalms thirty-seven, verse eight. Spreading and participating in unverified news can be frustrating because these participants are claiming things about a person they are not sure of. Rumor participants are constantly trying to form opinions without truth, which makes a group behave in the wrong way because they are actually increasing their level of wrath instead of eliminating it.

Jezebel, Ahab's wife, questioned her husband in First Kings twenty-one, verse eight, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? She wrote letters in Ahab's name from verse nine to go against Naboth. The rumors created by her husband cause Jezebel to devise this plan to seize Naboth's vineyard and eliminate him. The deadliest part of a rumor against someone is that most of the time, these activities are private. Did Naboth know that this was happening around him? Naboth only said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." The next thing Naboth was before the people, as in verse twelve, "They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people." After that, they stoned him and he died.

A rumor can have bad outcomes for the victim. In Naboth's situation, it turned out to be deadly for him. It didn't take much for him to be in a rumor. He was maintaining something of his own and rejected the offer as advised by God. And he died for that due to a rumor.

Therefore, anyone can be involved in a rumor, even without doing anything to anyone. Today, someone can look at you and find some fault

without you even knowing it. People can spread fake news whether you know or not, or whether you care or not. It could be two people or more. The more people involved, the more dangerous it can become.

These rumor participants can be very observant, whether close or distant. This group can form bad feelings against you and be mad with you without you even knowing it. Rumors make no more room for truth.