

## Elder Ephraim of Arizona: avoid slander



Slander is a great evil. Just as the little rudder steers the whole ship wherever it wants, likewise the tongue leads a person either to good or to evil.

The holy fathers greatly censure judging other people's sins, faults, or evil habits. When we judge our brother, we condemn ourselves to a great sin. But when we cover our brother, God will also protect us from great sins. When we expose our brother, we drive the grace of God away from us and He permits us to fall into the same sins so that we learn that we are all weak and that the grace of God supports us.

Whoever guards his tongue guards his soul from great sins and grievous falls. The chief cause of criticism and slander is pride and egotism, because one considers oneself better than the others. For this reason it is very beneficial for a person to think of himself as below everyone, so that he considers his brother than him in order that, with the help of God, he may be delivered from this evil.

If something pushes you to criticism in any matter regarding a brother or the

monastery, try to pray about the matter instead, without passing it under the judgment of your reason. If you turn within yourself through prayer, humility, and mourning, you will find a spiritual treasure—just keep pride and criticism far from you.

Based on Elder Ephraim of Arizona

In the photo a pious monk which even if he doesn't see very well, wants and tries to read the apostle during the Divine Liturgy. Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos.

[asceticexperience.com](http://asceticexperience.com)