

Don't Be a Bellows
James 3:1-5a, 9-10, and 13-18

Many people are like a bellows. They cannot help but _____ the _____ around other people's lives. Christians must not allow their _____ to stoke flames of discord and destructiveness.

The greatest damage we do to others is not with _____, knives, or _____. It is with our words. Like the bridle in a horse's mouth or a ship's rudder, the tongue can change the whole direction of a person's _____—yours and others.

James' main concern is speaking _____ to or about one another. Christians should never be critical of others, especially other believers, unless the words come from a heart and soul that wishes to _____ the other person _____. His reason is that any time we speak words of criticism about another person with hurtful intentions, we _____ our main instrument of praise, and we break our Lord's heart since He identifies with them as _____.

Jesus said in **Matt. 15:18**, "What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person." James agrees. Anyone who is critical and speaks about another person, not caring if it _____ that person and brings them down, is speaking from a heart of _____ and selfish ambition. James calls it earthly, unspiritual, even _____, and where you find it, you find _____.

The _____ can also be a problem according to **Prov. 17:4** and other texts. Listening to someone talk badly of another person says as much about _____ character as the critical speech says about the _____.

Alan Redpath said that this formula which uses the letters of "think" should be applied before speaking about another person. T -- is it True? H -- is it _____? I -- is it Inspiring? N -- is it Necessary? K -- is it _____? If what I am about to say does not pass those tests, I will keep my mouth shut!

When we discipline our speech, we create _____—the atmosphere in which _____ to Christ can flourish..