

Gossip Is Not Funny

An *Open Windows* magazine recently focused on a subject that we all ought to consider from time to time. It raised the question, "Have you seen Norman Rockwell's painting *The Gossips*?" I do remember it.

First painted for a *Saturday Evening Post* cover in 1948, the picture has been reproduced often. Rockwell portrayed the route of gossip.

The first woman turned and told a neighbor who told a neighbor who told a neighbor and on and on. A few were pictured on the old black telephone who called a friend who called a friend who told a friend through 15 different people until the message got back to the original woman whose expression showed shock!

Though the painting is humorous, true gossip is not funny at all. It can be hurtful and is extremely harmful. King Solomon spoke of the dangers of the mouth and tongue. *The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly* (Proverbs 18:8).

Christians are warned in James against the power and danger of the tongue. *The tongue is a fire... The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison* (James 3:6, 8). Words can wound emotions and damage reputations.

As we go about our responsibilities today in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, and we communicate with various publics as we must, whether by face-to-face conversation, by telephone or by e-mail, our prayer should be: *Lord, help me guard my heart, mind and tongue today by Your power at work within me.*

--Beecher Hunter