

Beat: News

Flattery Is Sweet

Rebuke Is Far Better

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USPA NEWS - “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. Proverbs 29:5”

Flattery is sweet. It strokes your pride and feeds your ego. But it closes your eyes to the character or intentions of the giver ““ you cannot see the trap being set.

No matter how pleasant it is to hear flattery, look out and get away, for someone is manipulating you.

Flattery is also nice to give. It produces a positive and warm response from most hearers. But the false feelings you give others is sin in the sight of God and noble men. While commending and praising others is good, excessive praise or manipulation is wrong.

Flattery is false, insincere, or excessive praise used to gratify the vanity or self-esteem of a person. It is sucking up to them, exaggerating their good features, and ignoring their faults. Men flatter others to obtain undeserved favor or otherwise serve their own purposes (Dan 11:21,32,34).

Self-esteem and pride, vulnerable traits of carnal Christians in these perilous times, are sinful symptoms of man’s depraved heart (II Tim 3:1-2).

Flattery is a sin in the sight of God and good men. It is lying speech, for it is either not true and/or insincerely given (Ps 12:2-3; 36:2; 78:36; Ezek 12:24). Praise with a deceitful motive is a profane and perverse thing: stay away from flatterers (Pr 20:19). Flattery is also unfaithful and wicked use of speech that works ruin (Pr 26:28; Ps 5:9-10). Rebuke is actually far better, for it has the noble and profitable goal of helping others (Pr 28:23).

Flattery is dangerous both to the giver and receiver. It is dangerous to the giver, because God will judge him for it, and he will be known as a lying toady (Job 17:5; Ps 12:1-3). It is dangerous to the receiver, for it can seduce him to do what he should not, as in the case of a whorish woman (Pr 2:16; 6:24; 7:5,21). Young readers, do not believe any romantic words from a person wanting you to sin. Believing flattery, no matter how much you desire it to be true, is conscious self-deception by an enemy (Pr 26:24-25). Despise it!

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God’s ministers do not flatter (I Thess 2:5). A wise man will not let men lie to him, even about his virtues (Pr 14:15). He will avoid obvious traps being set, and he will avoid the pleasant self-deception of flattery.

Honest commendation and praise of those with good character or conduct can be very good and useful. Paul used a large part of Romans 16 to praise a long list of early Christians, beginning with Phebe. Used wisely it is a way to provoke others to love and good works (Heb 10:24). David’s eulogy of Saul involves lofty praise and total avoidance of the man’s many faults (II Sam 1:17-27). If you never compliment or praise others, for there are those in every person’s life deserving it, you have fallen in the opposite ditch.

A wise man will not flatter, for he knows it is a sin despised by God and man (Pr 6:16-19). If he has a job involving clients, customers, patients, or church members, he will be very careful to deal with facts and reality. It is a temptation of this grinning, frivolous, superficial generation to flatter. All men must guard their friendships and neighborly relationships, lest they use excessive or insincere praise. Do you know that even flattering titles commonly used today are also condemned (Job 32:21-22; Matt 23:5-12)? Learn the lesson of this proverb and hate flattery in both directions and of all kinds.

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