

The Way of Christ Ministries

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Flattery

Psalms 12:2 *Everyone lies to their neighbor; they flatter with their lips but harbor deception in their hearts.*¹

1 Introduction

Due to a situation not long ago, I felt compelled to perform a word-study on the various forms of flattery, e.g. flatter, flattery, flatters, etc. Using human *wisdom*, flattery doesn't seem like a bad thing, after all the flatterer is sort of paying a compliment to the person being flattered, right?

The Apostle James wrote that human wisdom can be demonic (*James 3:15*). I was rather surprised by my word study that in every mention of flattery in the Bible, it is considered a negative, bad, even evil thing. Let's look at some Bible verses.

2 Bible Verses

Job 32:21–22 *I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.*

Psalms 12:2–3 *Everyone lies to their neighbor; they flatter with their lips but harbor deception in their hearts. May the LORD silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue—*

Psalms 36:2 *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.*

Psalms 78:35–37 *They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer. But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant.*

Proverbs 26:28 *A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

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Proverbs 28:23 *Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor rather than one who has a flattering tongue.*

Proverbs 29:5 (CEV) *Flattery is nothing less than setting a trap.*

Daniel 11:32 *With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.*

Romans 16:17–18 *I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.*

1 Thessalonians 2:5 *You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.*

Jude 1:14–16 *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.*

3 Application

Note that Jesus, who is our example to live up to, never flattered anyone. So why is flattery a bad thing?

1. Flattery is always used to manipulate people or to conceal the truth. God never manipulates. *“Whenever you encounter manipulation, you are not dealing with the true God.”* — Derek Prince
2. Flattery is often times insincere.
3. It can give the person being flattered a sense of pride and an inflated ego, both of which are contrary to Christian teachings. Watch out, because God humbles the proud.

Psalms 138:6 (NET) *Though the LORD is exalted, he looks after the lowly, and from far away humbles the proud.*

Isaiah 26:5 (NLT) *He humbles the proud and brings down the arrogant city. He brings it down to the dust.*

4. Those who accept flattery due to personal ambition are more susceptible to deception.

5. It can anger God by giving person(s) credit for something God has done:

Romans 1:21 *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

6. It can make the person a target of the devil as it did Job: [1, pg. 66]

Job 1:8 *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*

We must learn not to use flattery to manipulate others or gain something for ourselves. We must also recognize when we ourselves or others are being manipulated or used by flattery.

4 Prayer

"Heavenly Father, thank you for your scripture to help me better know you and your will. Make me aware if I ever exhibit unchristlike behavior by flattering someone. Keep me from being deceived by showing me the truth when someone tries to flatter me. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. Amen."

A References & Further Reading

- [1] Prince, Derek; *Why Bad Things Happen to God's People — Making Sense of Trials & Tribulations in Your Life*; Destiny Image Publishers; 2017.

B Scripture References

Job
1:8; 3
32:21–22; 1

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3:15; 1

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