

Our Attitude Towards Praise

There are two ways in which God judges us in the context of praise.

Proverbs 27:21 [Amplified Bible] *“As the refining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, both bring forth all the impurities of the metal. So let a man be in his trial of praise. For a man is judged by what he praises and of what he boasts.”*

1. How do we react to being praised?

a) Do we seek praise?

John 12:42-43 [NIV] *“Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.”*

Does the praise given by other human beings cause us to fail to confess your faith in the Creator God.

Matthew 23:1-3 [NIV] *“Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: **“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practise what they preach.”**”*

How did the scribes and Pharisees not practice what they preached.

Matthew 23:5-7 [NIV] *“**Everything they do is done for men to see:** They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the market-places and to have men call them ‘Rabbi’.”*

Everything they did was seeking the praise of other human beings rather than God.

b) We are warned against being influenced and inflated by praise, or seductive flattery

Proverbs 2:11, 16-19 [NIV] *“**Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.” ... “It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.”***

Such seductive flattery can lead a man to a deadly end.

Proverbs 5:1-6 [NIV] *“My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. **For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.**”*

When we lack godly wisdom as taught in His Word, the Christian Bible, flattering words can destroy our future.

c) A wise person is always aware of the detrimental effect of praise

The above scriptures point towards such wisdom.

The great preacher John Wesley was well aware of the danger of praise.

On being praised by one of his congregation on the quality of his sermon, Wesley's reply was "*the devil has just whispered in my ear just how good my sermon was as I stepped down from the pulpit.*"

It is **not** wrong for us to encourage those who expound God's Word to us, at least they know that someone was listening.

Far better is for our spiritual teachers to see and hear of the changes made in the lives of those in their congregations as a result of their explaining God's Word in a way all can understand.

2. We are judged by God as to what we praise

a) **Do we hero worship pop stars** in spite of their lifestyle involving drugs, perverted sex, etc.?

b) **Do we give praise where it is rightly due?**

When we see people going the "*second mile*" in their service of other people.

A good employer knows that rightly deserved praise is worth pounds in productivity and profit.

Too often modern management is only critical when things go wrong.

A good parent knows that praise, rightly given for even a small effort, can produce peace and co-operation in the home.

Encouragement exudes, extra energy and effort in everyone.

c) **Don't praise your own efforts**

This can be done very subtly, indirectly and even at times not realising that we are doing it.

Even if our great efforts go unnoticed by other people, let it remain that way.

The One who matters, our Creator God, does **not** overlook such acts of service.

1 Corinthians 15:58 [NIV] "*Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*"

God does **not** overlook even the smallest act of loving sacrifice.

Matthew 10:42 [NIV] "*And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.*"

A simple act but still has a reward.

Mark 12:41-44 [NIV] "*Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on."*

Jesus did **not** overlook the tiny sacrificial offering made by this widow.

Our attitude towards praise is a very good training situation for our future life

Our awareness of a right and wrong attitude towards praise has an end product which is the development of Godlike character.

God, because of who He is, and what He is, warrants every possible praise.

But praise will **not** cause God to divert from His perfect plan and will for humanity.

God will **not** compromise with the high standards that He demands to enter into His kingdom, His created family.

No amount of flattery will alter God's mind and will.

Isaiah 66:1-2 [NIV] ***“This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the LORD. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”***

Humble, thankful attitude of mind is what is pleasing to our Creator God.

Colossians 2:6-7 [NIV] *“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and **overflowing with thankfulness.**”*

The way we praise God is to be overflowing with thankfulness for what He has done for us through His Only non-created Son, Jesus Christ.