

If you are truly a child of God and not a counterfeit, it is essential to understand how God interacts with you especially in the areas of His praise and His warnings. This understanding helps you avoid living a life filled with anxiety or, on the other hand, pride.

The Nature of God's Praise and Warning

When God warns you, it does not necessarily mean He is displeased with you all the time. Similarly, when God praises you, it doesn't mean you have reached perfection or are always pleasing Him. The Christian life is a journey of growth, sanctification, and reliance on grace, not a status of flawless achievement (Philippians 1:6, ESV).

Peter's Confession and the Revelation of Christ's Identity

Consider the episode in Matthew 16 (NIV) where Jesus asks His disciples who people say He is, and then who they say He is:

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”
Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15-16)

Peter's declaration is a divinely inspired revelation, not just human insight. Jesus confirms this by saying:

“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (*Matthew 16:17-18, NIV*)

Here, Jesus reveals that the Church will be established on the truth of His divine identity as Messiah, a revelation given by God Himself. Peter is entrusted with “the keys of the kingdom,” symbolizing authority to bind and loose, representing governance and doctrinal authority in the early church (*Matthew 16:19*).

The Warning: Rebuking the Messiah

Yet shortly afterward, when Jesus predicts His suffering and death, Peter rebukes Him:

“Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!” (*Matthew 16:22, NIV*)

Jesus' response is sharp and sobering:

“Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” (*Matthew 16:23, NIV*)

This shows a profound theological truth: God's purposes often clash with human expectations. Peter, despite his revelation, momentarily falls into a human mindset rejecting the necessity of Christ's suffering, which was central to God's redemptive plan (Isaiah 53; Mark 8:31-33). Jesus calls Satan the “stumbling block” because Peter's words oppose God's will.

Balancing Praise and Warning in the Christian Life

This passage teaches us that God's praise and warnings serve different but complementary purposes. Praise encourages us and affirms God's work in us; warnings correct us and keep us aligned with His will (Hebrews 12:5-11). Neither praise nor warning should lead to pride or despair. Both come from a loving Father who desires our growth and holiness.

If God praises you, remember it is by His grace, not because you have attained perfection (Ephesians 2:8-9). If He warns you, do not be discouraged. God's warnings are meant to refine and restore, not to condemn (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Both Praise and Warning Can Coexist

The Bible shows that believers can receive both encouragement and correction simultaneously. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, letters to the seven churches contain both commendations and rebukes from Christ, urging them to persevere and repent (Revelation 2-3, ESV).

May you walk in humility, joy, and faithfulness as you respond to both God's praises and warnings. Know that He has good plans for you, and His ultimate goal is your sanctification and eternal fellowship with Him (Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28).

Shalom.

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