QUESTION: What is the message in

> *Proverbs 29:5?*“A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.”

ANSWER:
Proverbs 29:5 provides a cautionary message about the dangers of flattery.

In biblical theology, flattery is more than just excessive praise; it involves giving false admiration to someone with the hidden agenda of gaining personal benefit. The Bible warns against such behavior because it is manipulative and ultimately harmful.

Flattery is not given out of genuine appreciation but with the ulterior motive of seeking favor, position, or some form of reward. Proverbs 29:5 warns that when you flatter someone, you are essentially setting a trap for them:

> “spreading a net for their feet” *(Proverbs 29:5, ESV).*

The net metaphor here is significant in biblical literature. A net, or snare, symbolizes entrapment and harm. In this context, the flattery is compared to a trap that entices someone to fall into it, leading to their downfall.

Flattery often involves overstating someone's virtues, exaggerating their good qualities, or even keeping silent about their faults to make them feel good. This false praise is done with the goal of achieving something for oneself—whether it is to be favored, promoted, given special treatment, or to gain influence. The book of Proverbs warns that such actions are deceitful and will only lead to harm, both for the one who is being flattered and the one who is doing the flattering.

Biblical Examples of Flattery's Danger:

1. King Zedekiah and the False Prophets
   A powerful biblical example is the story of King Zedekiah of Judah, who listened to the false prophets instead of the true prophet, Jeremiah. The false prophets flattered Zedekiah with lies, telling him that God would give him victory and protect Judah, even though their message was not from God. Jeremiah, on the other hand, spoke the truth, warning Zedekiah of God's

judgment. The king refused to listen, and as a result, Judah was destroyed, and Zedekiah’s life was ruined. His eyes were gouged out, and he was taken into exile (Jeremiah 34-41).

This story exemplifies the danger of listening to those who flatter for personal gain. The false prophets were more interested in maintaining their position of power by pleasing the king, rather than speaking the truth. The tragic result was that Zedekiah fell into a trap, leading to his destruction.

2. King Ahab and the 400 False Prophets
   Another biblical example is King Ahab, who was deceived by 400 false prophets who flattered him by prophesying victory in battle, even though God had already condemned him (1 Kings 22:6-23). Ahab refused to listen to the prophet Micaiah, who spoke the truth, and instead trusted in the flattering words of the false prophets. The result was that Ahab was killed in battle, showing the consequences of relying on false praise and ignoring the truth.

Theological Significance of Proverbs 29:5

In Christian theology, flattery is viewed as a form of deceit that undermines genuine relationships. It distorts the truth and manipulates others for selfish purposes. Proverbs 29:5 serves as a reminder of the importance of truthfulness and integrity in our interactions. Jesus himself spoke against hypocrisy and deceit. In Matthew 23:27 (NIV), He condemned the Pharisees for their outward displays of righteousness while inwardly being corrupt, likening them to whitewashed tombs. This echoes the danger of flattery—it's an outward show of praise that covers up true intentions, which can be harmful both to the individual and to the community.

The Role of Integrity in the Christian Life

Flattery goes against the biblical call for Christians to live with integrity, honesty, and love. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians about the need for sincerity in ministry:

> "For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness." *(1 Thessalonians 2:5, ESV).*

Paul emphasizes that his ministry was rooted in sincerity, not in manipulating others for personal gain. The same principle applies in our everyday lives: Christians are called to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and to avoid using others for selfish purposes.

What Can We Learn from Proverbs 29:5?

The Bible does not only warn us about others who may flatter us but also cautions us about engaging in flattery ourselves. While it can be tempting to use flattery to gain favor or avoid conflict, Proverbs 29:5 teaches us that this is ultimately a deceitful practice that leads to harm.

Flattering others may seem harmless at first, but it can lead to destructive consequences, both for the one who is flattered and the one who flatters. When we flatter someone, we may be leading them down a path of pride, false security, or even destruction. In this sense, flattery is not love; true love speaks the truth, even when it’s difficult.

Conclusion

Proverbs 29:5 teaches us to be wary of flattery, whether from

others or from ourselves. Flattery is a form of deception that sets traps, and in the end, it leads to harm. The Bible calls us to embrace truth, integrity, and sincerity in our relationships, as exemplified by Jesus and the apostles. Instead of using flattery to manipulate others for personal gain, we are called to love others honestly and sincerely, helping them grow in truth and wisdom.

May the Lord bless you with wisdom and discernment.

JIUNGE NA GROUP LETU LA WHATSAPP HAPA >> WHATSAPP GROUP....

Share on:
WhatsApp