

Flattery

Scripture (The Bible) has a lot to say about flattery. There is much more said about flattery in the Tanakh (Old Testament) than in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament). The Hebrew word **chalaqqah** (khal-ak-kaw') strongs #:2514, means: smoothness, flattery which comes from the Hebrew root word **chalaq** (khal-ak) strongs #:2505b which means: to flatter "to be smooth or slippery."

The Greek word for flattery, **κολακείας** (kol-ak-i'-ah) strongs #:2850, which means flattery, with a view to advantage or gain. It occurs one (1) time in the New Testament. Paul is defending his ministry to the Thessalonians and he says, "For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; but just as we have been approved by **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) to be entrusted with the message of the Mashiach, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but **אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) who examines our hearts. For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed--**אֱלֹהִים** (Yahuah) is witness-- nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Mashiach we might have asserted our authority. **1 Thessalonians 2:3-6**. And it is, I think, more than coincidental that flattery occurs in that sentence with the word greed.

In other words, I want something from you. You can kind of get at the heart of flattery when you think about that. The idea of flattery is present without the word in **Jude 1:16** where Yahudah (Jude) accuses certain men of admiring persons for the sake of their own advantage. That is the idea. You are admiring and you are saying nice things about somebody for the sake of your own advantage.

Most dictionaries will define flattery as insincere praise that is undeserved or far in excess of what is proper for the circumstances. Moreover, flattery is intentionally conferred not to improve or encourage the recipient, but to manipulate that one to fall under the charms and desires of the flatterer. The flatterer seeks to gain his own advantage, to win control, to implement his ulterior motive via his lying lips.

The book of Proverbs warns of the "flattering lips of an adulteress" **Proverbs 6:24, 7:5, 21**. Flattery is often the first (1st) step to an adulterous affair.

Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your intimate friend; That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words. **Proverbs 7:4-5**

A significant element of flattery is flirtatious seduction. Many flatterers desire to use flattering lies to win the sexual favors of those upon whom they lavish their indecent excessive compliments. Flattering someone of the opposite Sex is flirtation.

Many a man has fallen to such flirtation and seduction such as: "You're just the strongest and most handsome man." With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one infetters to the discipline of a fool, **Proverbs 7:21-22**

To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words; **Proverbs 2:16**

While too many women have succumbed to exaggerations such as: "You're far prettier than my wife and much better at understanding me." The man who casually addresses most any woman with: "Hey beautiful," is likely exposing his flirtatious and flattering heart and places the reliability of all his speech into jeopardy.

There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue. **Psalms 5:9**

A wise person learns to recognize it and separate flattery from sincere compliments. Flattery is often coupled with lying, as a flatterer is not concerned with whether or not he or she is being truthful **Psalm 5:9, Romans 16:18**.

Unfortunately, flattery can also be used within believers circles under the guise of encouragement. Since scriptural times, some false teachers have used flattery to lead people astray and to benefit themselves. In **1 Thessalonians 2:5**, Paul reminds believers that the apostles had never resorted to flattery in spreading the message of the Mashiach (Messiah): "You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed." Scripture warns of false teachers who use flattery to introduce heresies intended to deceive Mashiach's followers and line their own pockets **2 Peter 2:3, Romans 16:18, Daniel 11:32**.

Flattery can be defined as "the act of giving excessive compliments, generally for the purpose of gaining approval or favor oneself with the one they are flattering." The difference between flattery and a compliment is the benefactor. Flattery has a selfish motivation. The flatterer hopes to gain approval or advantage over the one being flattered. Compliments, however, are sincere acknowledgments of admiration spoken to praise someone else. A compliment is intended to benefit the recipient, whereas flattery benefits the flatterer.

Flattery boosts egos, pride, and it can also put pressure on the person who is being flattered. Flattery is mostly to seek favor from someone or it might be a complete lie and is a tool that false teachers use. They flatter and at the same time they water down the message of scripture.

Flattery is to compliment excessively and often insincerely given, especially in order to win favor. Sincerity is lacking in human relations today. Flattery or sweet talk, which is another way that the tongue can be used for evil.

Flattery is a Sin of the tongue. Scripture (The Bible) speaks of flattery as a characteristic of the wicked and of a Sinful person. Flattery is another form of lying, and it has no place in the life of a Believer. It is an another misuse of the tongue.

Flattery is in scripture (the Bible) in several places, including Psalms, Proverbs, the book of Job and elsewhere. Several Psalms (**Psalm 5, 12, 36, 49, 78**) equate the false words of flattering with lying, deceiving, hiding Sin, and promoting wickedness. Job understood that such lying words were not something that was acceptable to **יְהוָה** (Yahuah).

He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their Aluah (God) shall stand firm and take action. And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery. **Daniel 11:32-34**

Preachers and teachers use flattery as a means to increase personal followings. Their messages contain cheerful verses and illustrations designed to make their hearers feel better about themselves and about the teachers. There is much talk about discovering one's potential and developing personal greatness. This is nothing more than flattery intended to create popularity for the speaker and his or her message. It sells books and media time, but it often bears little resemblance to the message of scripture or what **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) proclaimed.

OWYAZL (Yahusha)'s message did nothing to inflate the self-importance of His hearers. Rather, He stressed the need to die to ourselves, take up our stake (tree) daily, and follow Him **Luke 9:23**. He said that those who desire to keep their lives will lose them **Luke 17:33** and that, if we love anyone more than Him, we are not worthy of Him **Matthew 10:37-39**. These teachings are the opposite of flattery. **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) never shied away from stating what someone needed to hear (**Mark 10:21-22; Luke 9:61-62**) because His motivation was always to do His Father's will **John 8:29**. **OWYAZL** (Yahusha) spoke the truth whether it was popular or not. He refused to compromise the Word, even when great multitudes left Him **John 6:66**. He spoke in love, but He never resorted to flattery for personal gain. As His followers, we should be careful to do likewise.

Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak shalum (peace) with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. **Psalms 28:3**

A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin. **Proverbs 26:28**
Speaking sweetly in the face of others and backbiting behind them is Sin.

Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babbler. **Proverbs 20:19**

Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May **YAHUAH** (Yahuah) cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts. **Psalms 12:2-3**

I will not show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person. For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away. **Job 32:21-22**

Lead me, O **YAHUAH** (Yahuah), in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me. For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. **Psalms 5:8-9**

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. **Luke 6:45**

What is the difference between encouragement and flattery?

First (1st), let us define our terms. Encouragement has the word 'courage' in it, and as such means to inspire someone to be courageous, hopeful, and confident. The basic definition of flattery is excessive, insincere praise. Its usually given in order to motivate someone to do or think something they might not otherwise do (to think well of or to help the person giving the praise, etc.).

In Scripture (the Bible), flattery is not speaking words to help strengthen someone

for their own sake, but speaking words to deceive and to cover the speaker's motives. Encouragement is the TRUTH presented with good will toward others, while flattering is a LIE that seeks to use others.

Scriptural examples of encouragement include **Deuteronomy 1:38, 3:28, Judges 7:11, 20:22**, and **2 Samuel 19:7**. A New Testament person widely known to encourage others is Barnabas **Acts 4:36**. He played a pivotal role in spreading the message of the Mashiach in the first (1st) century (**Acts 9:27, 11:22, 13:2**, etc.).

Solomon said the following about flattery.

He who rebukes a man shall afterwards find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue **Proverbs 28:5**

A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet **Proverbs 29:5**

Believers should always pursue honest encouragement toward others while shunning the lying words of flattery.

“The lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech” **Proverbs 5:3**.

“With her many persuasions she entices him, and with her flattering lips she seduces him.” **Proverbs 7:21**

The most general statement about flattery, in its destructive effects, is **Proverbs 26:28**: “A flattering mouth works ruin.” Or **Proverbs 29:5**: “A man who flatters his neighbor is spreading a net for his steps.”

So the key question becomes: How can we celebrate or praise good things about another person without spreading a net for their feet or working their ruin? I think the key difference between good praise and bad flattery is this: Flattery is bad because it's calculated, it is given with a view to obtaining some advantage.

These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Adon **OWYAZ** (Yahusha). They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own unrighteous passions.” It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Ruach (Spirit). **Jude 1:16-19**

Flattery may be true. It may be not true. That is not the issue. You may be saying something true about somebody and still be flattering. The issue is whether it is calculated to achieve some purpose that is not rooted in the authentic, spontaneous delight that we take in the virtue we are praising.

In other words, the key mark of genuine non-flattering praise is that it's the overflow of authentic delight in what we are observing about the other person. It is the opposite of calculation. It is spontaneous. “We delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not only expresses, but completes the enjoyment.

But flattery does not flow from a sincere delight in the thing being praised. It is all external and manipulative, it is elicited out of us by some other benefit that we are hoping to get through the flattery, not by the benefit that we just got from the person's kindness, virtue, beauty or accomplishment.

Flattery is a form of hypocrisy. We try to give the impression that we are being moved by a spontaneous delight in something we admire, but we are not really being moved by spontaneous admiration. We are calculating, desiring to use praise to get something.

So this raises the question of whether it is appropriate to “use praise” as a means of bringing about behaviors in children or employees or friends. Doesn’t that imply some kind of calculated use of praise for ulterior motives? And that is a tough question.

I think the answer would be: If the praise can still be an expression of authentic, spontaneous delight in some good that we have observed, and if our goal is that the child or the friend do more of that behavior, not for the sake of praise, but because it is intrinsically beautiful and honors **יְהוָה** (Yahuah), then it is legitimate to hope that our praise will produce more good behavior.

I think it is dangerous to think of our praise of others, including our children, in flattery terms. Children are going to catch on to this eventually. They are going to say: “I don’t think dad really enjoyed what I just did. He is just trying to use it to get me to do something” — namely, thinking that our praise will bring about behaviors that we want. It is not going to be authentic.

To Compliment or Flatter

You only flatter those whom you wish to abuse. By way of contrast, compliments go to those you love because you desire to encourage them to excel.

Flattery is unlike a compliment in almost every respect except in its candy-coated outward appearance. A compliment is an expression of genuine appreciation or praise. It honestly assesses the value of a thing well done and assigns a corresponding amount of respect and honor. A compliment is given to encourage the person to continue to strive to engage in high value efforts.

A man will be praised according to his insight **Proverbs 12:8**

Flattery may superficially sound like a compliment, but it is a sinister poisonous imposter that has a pleasant taste to make it easier to swallow. Flattery has the sound of praise in its words, but it is a fraud.

There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue. **Psalms 5:9**

Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May **יְהוָה** (Yahuah) cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts, those who say, “With our tongue we will prevail, our lips are with us; who is master over us?” **Psalms 12:2-4**

To Love or Hate

When someone offers a timely and appropriate compliment the goal is bestow good on another person, to benefit them and to encourage excellent behavior on their part. To do good to another person is to love them **1 Corinthians 12**.

On the other hand, to flatter another person is to attempt to bend them to do what you desire them to do. Just as flattery is the tool of the manipulator, lies are what

powers the tool. Flattery is always manipulative. Flattery deceives the recipient by obscuring the speaker's intentions with exaggerated praise that is unearned or beyond valid reason. Flattery is insincerity designed to coerce someone to do something for the good of flatterer.

He who hates disguises it with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart. When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven (7) abominations in his heart. Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him. A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin. **Proverbs 26:24-28**

The use of lies to get one's own selfish way at the expense of someone else is the very definition of hatred. You only flatter those you hate. Those whom are flattered are led into a ruinous trap of service to the flatter.

Love Speaks Only Truth

Many times we are admonished in the Word to speak only truth. The truth is love. Often it is a tough love which calls out to a person that they are a Sinner and must Repent. Yet it is love because it is done only for the benefit of the other person, only for their good. Wisdom and Truth are Kadosh siblings just as Flattery and Deceit are Evil twins.

He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue. **Proverbs 28:23**

Flattery is Manipulative Selfishness

Scripture is very harsh toward those who seek their own pleasures and interests above those of their neighbors or spiritual brothers. Selfish people are slaves to their own appetites and they use flattery to seek to enslave others to satisfy their self-interests.

For such men are slaves, not of our Adon **OWYAZ** (Yahusha) but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. **Romans 16:18**

Sin itself is personified in the Psalms as a flatterer that deceives the Sinful heart into thinking that all his Sins are secret. In short, the Sinner's heart falls prey to his own flatteries and deadly deceptions. There is no good in flattery.

Transgression speaks to the unrighteous within his heart; There is no fear of **AYAZ** (Yahuah) before his eyes. For it flatters him in his own eyes Concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise and to do good. **Psalms 36:1-3**

At times in Yisrael's history those who were self-styled prophets attempted to gain the favor of the people and kings by delivering fake prophecies that **AYAZ** (Yahuah) did not speak. These fraudulent prophecies flattered the people by calling them righteous and Baruch (Blessed) even though the people were not righteous. All this was done in an attempt to get the people to give the flattering and deceptive prophets money, food, and housing.

"For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house

of Yisrael. "For I אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it," declares אַיָּהּ (Yahuah) Aluah (God)." **Ezekiel 12:24-25**

A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin. **Proverbs 26:28** ...but love edifies. **1 Corinthians 8:1**

But they flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues. **Psalm 78:36**

"Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. **Luke 6:26**

His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. **Psalm 55:21**

My son, keep my words and treasure up my Commandments with you; keep my Commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend, to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words. ...**Proverbs 7:1-27**

In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. **Daniel 11:21**

And they come to you as people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear what you say but they will not do it; for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain. And behold, you are to them like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument, for they hear what you say, but they will not do it. **Ezekiel 33:31-32**

And the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Behold, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king. Let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." **1 Kings 22:13**

So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of אַיָּהּ (Yahuah). **Luke 20:21**

This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. Selah **Psalm 49:13**

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. **2 Timothy 4:3-4**

You are of your father HaSatan (the devil), and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **John 8:44**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? **Jeremiah 17:9**

Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. **Proverbs 4:5**

The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends. **Proverbs 14:20**

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. **Proverbs 18:21**

Wealth brings many new friends, but a poor man is deserted by his friend. **Proverbs 19:4**

Many seek the favor of a generous man, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts. **Proverbs 19:6**

Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked. **Proverbs 25:26**

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes. **Proverbs 26:4-5**

They only plan to thrust him down from his high position. They take pleasure in falsehood. They Barach (bless) with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. Selah **Psalms 62:4**

It seems that flattery is a mortal sin. For, "a thing is evil because it is harmful." But flattery is most harmful, according to **Psalms 9:24**, "For the sinner is praised in the desires of his soul, and the unjust man is Baruch (blessed). The Sinner has provoked אַיָּהּ (Yahuah)." Nothing so easily corrupts the human mind as flattery". The tongue of the flatterer harms more than the sword of the persecutor." Therefore flattery is a most grievous Sin.

A mortal Sin is one that is contrary to Love. Now flattery is sometimes contrary to Love and sometimes not. It is contrary to Love in three (3) ways.

(1st) First , by reason of the very matter, as when one man praises another's Sin: for this is contrary to the love of אַיָּהּ (Yahuah), against Whose justice he speaks, and contrary to the love of his neighbor, whom he encourages to Sin. Wherefore this is a mortal Sin, according to **Isaiah 5:20**. "Woe to you that call evil good."

(2nd) Second , by reason of the intention, as when one man flatters another, so that by deceiving him he may injure him in body or in soul; this is also a mortal Sin, and of this it is written **Proverbs 27:6**: "Better are the wounds of a friend than the deceitful kisses of an enemy."

(3rd) Third , by way of occasion, as when the praise of a flatterer, even without his intending it, becomes to another an occasion of Sin.

Furthermore, whoever does harm by words, harms himself no less than others: wherefore it is written **Psalms 36:15**: "Let their sword enter into their own hearts." Now he that flatters another induces him to Sin mortally. "The false praise of the flatterer softens the mind by depriving it of the rigidity of truth and renders it susceptible of vice." Much more, therefore, does the flatterer Sin in himself.

when a Hebrew ruler attempted application of the flattering title "Good Teacher" to **וַיָּשָׂא** (Yahusha) HaMashiach, **אַיָּהּ** (Yahuah) instantly corrected him, saying:

“Why do you call me good? Nobody is good, except one, **יְהוָה** (Yahuah).” **Luke 18:18, 19**; compare **Job 32:21, 22**.

What This Means to the Believer

Whatever words come out of a Believer’s mouth must be sincere and true. They must be intentionally crafted to benefit someone else and not to satisfy our own selfish desires. Our speech must encourage others to do good and to be Kadosh (Holy).

When speaking:

- Evaluate your motives to determine if your speech is for the benefit of the hearer (loving speech) or to gain a personal advantage over others (selfish speech).
- Offer compliments that are in balance with the value of what has been done for you by others.
- Be honest with your words, speak only truth and avoid exaggerations or outright falsehoods.

When being spoken to:

- Be discerning regarding the speech that others direct toward you.
- Train yourself to identify praise that is unearned or beyond reasonable expectations.
- Recognize that flattery (unwarranted or excessive praise) is designed to mislead you and cause you to be open to selfish manipulation by the speaker.
- Advise the one who is speaking flattery that they are not being accurate in their speech.
- Avoid subjecting yourself to very much flattery lest you begin to believe the deceits they convey.

Just as truth complements love, so dishonesty and insincerity complement flattery. Flattery and selfishness are hunting companions that feed off the capture and ruin of others.

Flattery is hatred concealed behind insincere gracious-sounding speech. Flattery is deception motivated by selfishness and leads to the ruin of the hearer. Love and truth benefit the hearer and are superior to flattery and deception in every possible way. We must always and only speak the truth to the edification of all around us so that they may serve and praise **יְהוָה** (Yahuah).

Maybe for the first time in your life, you now realize that flattery is an evil act. So, the next time someone flatters you, just get away from them as quickly and as politely as you can. I, like yourself, have been subject to flattery many times. Everyone likes to hear nice things about themselves, but the adversary with his slyness will use this principle to get what he wants from you. Every person has a weakness and many people have given into flattery, but I believe it is because they never knew before that flattery was evil in nature. I am believing that because of this teaching, you now know this for the first (1st) time in your life. But now that

you know the truth of scripture you will now recognize flattery more easily when it comes.