



Compliments Paid to God's People

Hebrews 11:16 -- *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

Introduction

1. We all like to receive compliments. They are many times a measure of our worth and accomplishment, recognition of work that has been well done.
2. The worth of a compliment depends on the one doing the complimenting. Jesus cautions, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you..." Meaning, if everyone likes you, you are not saying some things you should, or taking the stand that you should.
3. The best compliments come from God. We are going to take a look at some compliments God has paid to various individuals, and what we need to do is ask: "Would God have said that same thing to me?"

A. Divine Praise:

1. For Zealousness

2 Corinthians 7:11 -- *For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!...*

2 Corinthians 9:2 -- *For I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, namely, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them.*

- Zeal is delight and enthusiasm for a thing. Why it is complimented is because it is evidence that one has taken a genuine liking for a task or study. Zeal ensures that a thing is well attacked, meticulously considered, and accomplished with pride.
- Zeal is also infectious. A love for something can be carried over into other things and can also be spread to other individuals, to infect them in a good way.

2. For Faithfulness.

Colossians 1:2-4 -- *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae; grace to you and peace from God our Father... we give thanks to God... since we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints.*

Luke 7:7-9 -- *"... for this reason I did not consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."*

- When one is faithful it means that they can be trusted. This is not only in a negative way, as in, they will not cheat you or steal from you, but also in a positive way, meaning, they give you maximum effort out of a sense of responsibility.
- This later also means, that they take initiative. If they see something that needs doing, they do it. They are imaginative, thus not only working hard, but smart.
- It is the ability to anticipate a boss' or master's desire and have a thing accomplished or handled before it is even asked for. It thrives on pleasing.

3. For Good Works.

Acts 9:36,39 -- *Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did... all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.*

- Despite what many religious groups claim, God does judge us on our works (Romans 2:6; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:12), especially the ones He has stipulated that we need to do to look after others.
- God is pleased with those who give of themselves to serve others, since this is what His Son did (Philippians 2:1-7).

4. For Refreshing Others.

1 Corinthians 16:17-18 -- *And I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus; because they have supplied what was lacking on your part. For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.*

Philemon 7 -- *For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.*

- This life is a life of hardship and the good do get weary from fighting against those who are selfishly ambitious or just plain evil.
- Therefore, God appreciates those who strive to encourage others, who constantly stir others up to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25), who, like their Lord, give rest to those who are weary and heavy laden (Galatians 6:2).

5. For Doing All That They Could.

Mark 14:3-9 -- *And while He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. And some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted?" ...But Jesus said, "Let her alone: why do you bother her? She has done a good deed to Me... She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial..."*

Mark 12:42-44 -- *And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on"*

- From the very first of a Christian's commitment, God has looked to those who are willing to give all. Jesus points out that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart and soul and might (or mind).
- In one parable, some are given one talent and others five, yet God expects even a return from very little. This is what we see in these two examples, and it should also be noted that they are both women.

6. For Giving Of Self.

2 Corinthians 8:3-5 -- *For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.*

2 Corinthians 8:12 -- *For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have.*

- It is also worthy of note that when Christians are praised for their giving, it is not so much the things they give (i.e. money, land, or other valuables), but for the spirit in which things are given (1 Corinthians 9:7).
- They donated their lives to help out their fellowman. When they didn't have, they worked as if they did.

B. Unintentional Human Praise

Daniel 6:4-5 -- *Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground of accusation against Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."*