
Words of Truth

“He Flattereth Himself In His Own Eyes”

By: Brian A. Yeager

How important is it for us all to be able to examine ourselves and see ourselves honestly (II Corinthians 13:5)? What good are the Scriptures to us if we cannot see ourselves through them (James 1:21-25)? God says that integrity is a guide to the upright (Proverbs 11:3). What if you have little or no integrity (Proverbs 20:7)? Take a step back. Read the Scriptures I just cited as references. The answers to our questions are contained in those Scriptures.

Consider yourself. Are you capable of honest self-examination? What if you practice self-deception (Galatians 6:3)? Will you be able to see it? Will you just tell yourself that you can see yourself honestly as part of a lie you are telling yourself? The process of self-evaluation requires a search of oneself (Lamentations 3:40). Yet, how does a spiritually blind person see anything honestly?

These questions cause me, as a teacher of God’s word, much distress. Me teaching myself and teaching others requires self-examination on both sides. In part, I depend on you and you depend on me. However, in the end we stand alone in answering for our own selves (Romans 14:11-12 and II Corinthians 5:10). I have to prepare for that day and you have to prepare for that day. I know me better than you and you know you better than I know you (what a sentence – right?). Point being, all teaching is pointless if each of us cannot apply the Scriptures properly to ourselves (Isaiah 1:3-20 and Isaiah 44:9-20). Here is where the title of this article comes into discussion. Self-flattery destroys any chance of learning and obeying the truth.

Flattering Oneself Is Spiritual Suicide

Consider God’s word on this: *“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good. He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil”* (Psalms 36:1-4).

When you consider the Scriptures you just read you find many things to consider. For one, if you find yourself flattering yourself to keep from what is doing right, you’ll reach a point where you will be unable to find and hate your iniquity. How will that help you? Job abhorred himself and that led to his repentance (Job 42:1-6). If you reach a point wherein you cannot bring yourself to the need for repentance you are surely going to perish (Luke 13:3).

This point of flattery, as we read in Psalms 36:1-4, is rooted in dishonesty with oneself. This keeps oneself from being washed from their filthiness (Proverbs 30:12-13). Without a

good and honest heart there is no way the word of God will work on a person (Luke 8:11-15). Remember, honesty is the root of reflection (Psalms 26:1-3). A good heart is at the root of obedience to God (Psalms 119:9-11, Jeremiah 29:13, and Romans 6:17).

Even if you've flattered yourself to the point wherein you cannot see yourself, there might be slight hope that another can help you see yourself (II Samuel 11:1-12:10). However, if you reach a point of self-deception where you have set yourself to stay as you are, where will that lead?

This point of flattery, as we read in Psalms 36:1-4, leads one to be set in a way that is not good. This person cannot abhor him or herself. For a person to repent of his or her sins that person has to be able to come to his or herself and seek to be made right (Luke 15:11-24). The ability to be restored requires the ability to accept you're wrong (Acts 8:13-24). Those whom despise the need of correction have reached a point of no remedy (II Chronicles 36:14-16). Change will not happen if the self-flattery brings about self-justification.

When Your Own Flattery Leads To Self-Justification

Plenty of people seek to justify themselves (i.e. Luke 16:15). Self-justification keeps people from submitting themselves to God. Consider these inspired words: *“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Romans 10:1-3).

Regarding the subject of being justified, do you think you can really be justified while in sin? The word of God says such cannot happen (Galatians 2:17; cf. John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-13, I Corinthians 15:34, II Corinthians 7:1, II Corinthians 13:11, Ephesians 1:4, II Timothy 2:19, and Titus 2:11-14). What if you or I know this and just lie to ourselves? Should we not be a people that live honestly in all things (Hebrews 13:18)? Doesn't “all things” include being honest with ourselves?

Be Honest With Yourself

To be saved we all have to be capable of thinking on our ways and turning to God's ways (Psalms 119:59-60). To be faithful to the Lord we all have to be able to honestly prove our own work (Galatians 6:4). So, as we step back and test all things (Ephesians 5:10) by the standard of God (Luke 4:4), we have to be sure we are being honest. See yourself as God does and will. Remember, He knows what is in all of our hearts (Psalms 44:21).

Conclusion

Hold on to a good and honest heart. A godly heart, directed by the truth (Proverbs 23:12), is a good tool in assuring our salvation. We have to be careful though, because our hearts can be deceptive (Jeremiah 17:9). Therefore, once again, we need to be sure that our hearts are being properly guided by the word of God (Proverbs 2:1-3:8). Consider this in conclusion: *“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God”* (I John 3:20-21).