

Boasting, Flattery, And Exaggeration

June 11, 2023

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors.

At CrossWinds, our mission is reaching people with Jesus. We do that by sending missionaries around the world and by building relationships with people in our community to tell them the good news of what Jesus has done.

Speaking of being on mission to reach people with Jesus, the elders recently began a small capital campaign to update the Spirit Lake campus. The update is intended to help us better reach our community. It includes moving from pews to chairs and painting the worship space the same color used on the Spencer Campus. It also involves transitioning to modern LED lighting in this room. We also hope to add a small garage next to the gym for storage. The funding goal is \$110,000. So far, about \$18,000 has come in toward this project. We ask that you give to that campaign as the Lord leads you to join us in our mission to reach people with Jesus. You can give by putting a check or cash in the offering boxes in the back of the worship space. Be sure to designate Capital Fund on the check. You can also give on the church app. That is the way most people do their giving on both campuses. So if you have not downloaded the church app, you will find a QR code for the app on the back of your bulletin. I encourage you to download the app and join the rest of the church family online.

This morning, we continue our series on Taming the Tongue. In previous weeks of this series, we looked at the power of our words. We also looked at the importance of truthfulness in our words. Recently we looked at what the Bible

says about gossip and slander, which is something I am sure none of us have done. Last week, we looked at what the Bible says about grumbling, which is also something that never happens to us!

If you missed those messages, they are on the crosswinds.tv website as well as the church app. You won't regret taking the time to listen to them.

Today, we continue our series by looking at our ego and how our ego shows up in our words. We are looking at boasting, flattery, and exaggeration. Whenever I talk about the danger of pride, a big ego, and the importance of having humility, there are always people who come up to me after the service a little confused. It is not that they don't understand the importance of humility, but they are not sure why we should avoid pride.

They say, shouldn't we take pride in our work and do our best? Shouldn't take pride in how we look? Shouldn't we shave, shower, and wear deodorant?

When we speak of pride that way, I agree. Pride in its simplest form isn't wrong. Pride to present ourselves well to others and do our best at work is not wrong. The problem is that pride, that is, our ego, refuses to stay at a nice manageable size. Like a cancerous tumor, it gets bigger and bigger until it takes over our life and destroys it. How can we recognize someone with an overdeveloped ego? Here are some signs of a life with too much pride, an overdeveloped ego.

1. You can recognize an overinflated ego is overinflated when 75 percent of their conversations start with, "I". They love to talk about themselves.

2. You can recognize an overinflated ego when someone joins a conversation and then hijacks that conversation to make it about themselves.
3. You can recognize an overinflated ego when someone interrupts people and answer questions instead of waiting for other people to speak.
4. You can recognize an overinflated ego when someone loves to criticize other people and talk about what is wrong in their life, but they never talk about themselves an areas where than can improve.
5. You can recognize an overinflated ego when someone never acknowledges other people as right. They always see themselves as right.

As I went through that list, did you find yourself checking some of those boxes? I know I did. All of us are guilty of an overinflated ego.

What is the only thing that can get our ego back in line? It is not by trying harder to be humble. If we focus on trying harder to be humble, we become proud of our humility! It reminds me of a sermon on humility that a pastor preached. He gave it the satirical title, "Humility and how I achieve it." Trying harder to be humble doesn't work. If that is the case, where does true humility come from? It is found only one way.

The only way to become humble is to open the Bible. It is to read the truth about what the Bible says about our sin. All of us are sinners. We are addicted to sin. On our own power, we can not break free from the grip of sin. There is nothing we can do to escape the consequence of our sin before God. We justly deserve the lake of fire for our sin. As we continue to read the Bible, there is more to the story. God loves us. He knows there is no way we can save

ourselves so he set out to save us. He did that by sending his own son to take on human flesh forever. His name is Jesus. Jesus died on the cross in our place for our sin to bring us back to God. Jesus created everything in the universe. He had a reason to be proud, but he was not. He humbled himself to completely save us because there was nothing we could do to save ourselves. All we can do is trust what Jesus has done for us. We receive it, and we are saved completely and fully forever by Jesus. When we know that truth from the Bible, and we trust in what Jesus has done for us, and make it our own, the Bible says we are born again. In that time, God gives us a different heart that is like Jesus and longs to become more like Jesus. The humility of Jesus is given to us and we begin to live it out in us. We don't live it perfectly. We don't live it flawlessly, but true humility can only come as a gift of God from Jesus. It is not found by trying harder to be humble.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

When our ego is overinflated, it gets our mouth in all kinds of trouble. It shows up in our speech three ways. We will speak with boasting, flatter, and exaggeration in our words. Let's look at them this morning.

What does the Bible say about boasting?

Boasting is focusing on ourselves and our accomplishments.

Boasting is a popular social sport. Parties would be dull if people didn't like to talk about themselves. Studies show that people like to talk about themselves more than they like money. In one study I ran across, people given a choice at a party. They could get paid if they talked about someone else. If they talked about

themselves, they lost the money. One in every four people preferred to talk about themselves instead of be paid to talk about the people.

On the surface, boasting about ourselves and our accomplishments seems like harmless fun. If you have it, you mine as well flaunt it. When my children were little, they wrestled in Saturday tournaments. If they won, they asked if they could wear their little gold or silver metals to church on Sunday. They were proud of their wrestling. They loved to show their medals to the elderly folks in the church. The elderly folks loved to talk to them about their sports. It was cute.

The problem is when that continues into adulthood. It is one thing to be a six-year-old that talks about yourself. It is totally different if you are a 26-year-old who loves to talk about yourself. It is social suicide to only care about yourself and not care about other people to hear what they have to say. The most basic rule of communication is that we should focus on what is of interest to others in a conversation, not on ourselves.

Focusing on ourselves, our accomplishments, and centering conversations around us is boasting. Let's look at what the Bible says about boasting.

Boasting destroys the purpose for which God saved us.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (ESV)

Jesus didn't save us to center our lives around ourselves. Our lives are to be about Jesus and how we can bring glory to him. When our conversation focuses on ourselves and our accomplishments, we are failing to accomplish the

purpose for which God saved us. That purpose is to bring glory to God in our life, not to bring more glory to ourselves in our life.

Boasting is putting ourselves in front of other people.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

Paul tells us that our motivation for life should not be selfish ambition. The goal of our life should not be to make ourselves bigger in this world. It should be to make God, and what God the Father has done for us through Jesus bigger in this world. There is nothing wrong with financial success. There is nothing wrong with popularity, power, or influence. God gives us those things so we can make more of Jesus in this world, not more of ourselves in the world.

Paul also says we should be humble and value others above ourselves. This is hard. It is easy to value ourselves above others.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 (ESV)

Instead of boasting about ourselves and our accomplishment in conversations, it is better to stop talking about ourselves and be interested in others and what is happening in their life instead of our own.

Both of these verses come from Philippians 2. Philippians 2 is a chapter about Jesus and what he did for us. Jesus had the best seat in the universe. He was seated at the right hand of God the father. He chose to put that all aside. Instead of looking out for his interests and his comfort, he looked at our desperate need to be saved. Philippians 2 tells us Jesus chose to set aside the majesty of dwelling with his father. He humbled himself to take on a human body forever. In

that human body, he chose to humble himself to die for us. He chose to take upon himself all of our sin in order to save us.

If Jesus cared about us enough that he set aside the majesty and glory of heaven for the horrid experience of death on a cross for our sin, and he did it all because he cared about us in order to save us, that means it is a small sacrifice in our conversations with others to be like Christ and put aside our interests and be genuinely concerned about the interest of others instead of our own.

Boasting is claiming I am good when only God is good.

There is nothing good that is in us. Any good thing we have in our life is a gift from God that we don't deserve. The Bible says this.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. Romans 7:18 (ESV)

Apart from Jesus, there is nothing good inside of us. When we watch the news and see a murder, a drug addict, or a person whose life is a complete basket case, part of us looks at them and sees them as an idiot. We say to ourselves, "I am so much better than that."

Folks, the truth is that if it were not for God's grace in our lives, we would be no different than they are. The Bible tells us nothing good lives in us.

When we see the videos of Ukrainians hungry for food and their buildings bombed by the Russians or when we see drone video from Ukraine of drones dropping hand grenades on Russian soldiers, we must remember, almost none of the Russians or Ukrainians that are dying wanted to go to war. They were forced into war and killing one another. That could be us. We don't deserve the peace we enjoy in our country. We don't deserve the prosperity we enjoy in our

country. All of those things that make this July 4 weekend possible are gifts from God that we do not deserve. Don't give ourselves credit for the peace and prosperity we enjoy. Give God the credit because that is where it comes from. As Paul said, "Nothing good lives in us."

Some of you know that as elders, we are paired up in Iron Man groups. That means we meet once a week for about 20 minutes to hold one another accountable for memorizing a verse of our own choosing. One week, my verse was John 15:8.

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. John 15:8 (ESV)

I chose that verse because it reminded me that the way God is glorified in my life when I try to bear fruit for Jesus. Whenever we have a verse like this, it is important to read a verse in context. We need to read a few verses before and after to understand the verse's meaning. Just before John 15:8, look what Jesus says.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (ESV)

The only way anything of importance and lasting value will come from our lives is when we abide in Jesus. Whatever makes a true and lasting difference in this world grows out of our relationship with Jesus. Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of lasting eternal value.

Today we have people like Elon Musk making a huge difference on the planet with electric cars from Tesla and rockets from Space X. It looks like Elon is making a big difference in this world but apart from Jesus, nothing of lasting eternal significance can take place in this world. This means ordinary people with

Jesus, people like you and me, will make more of an eternal difference in this world than people like Elon Musk who don't know Jesus.

The next question is, "How do I abide in Jesus?" How can I be in a relationship with Jesus that leads me to bear fruit? Here are some suggestions. First, regularly reading our Bibles. If you are a Christians who doesn't read your Bible, start making time to put your finger in the text today. Maybe it is simply reading a chapter a day. Maybe it is reading one chapter only four days a week. Start somewhere. You and I can not bear fruit for Jesus unless we are in the word spending time with Jesus. Second, taking the time to pray. Slow down. After we read the word, take time to pray. Talk to Jesus about life. It is amazing. As we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit will speak back to us as we read the Bible. Third, take time to be involved in church. It is being around other Christians that help us follow Jesus. Churches aren't perfect. Only Jesus is perfect. Jesus chose the church to be the place where his people gather to encourage one another in this world.

We must remember that apart from Jesus, on our own, we can do absolutely nothing of lasting value in this world. This is why it is so important not to boast about ourselves and our accomplishments. The only things of lasting value that happen in our lives come out of our relationship with Jesus in this life, not from ourselves.

Boasting is promising what I can't guarantee to deliver.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will

live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. James 4:13–16 (ESV)

This is a subtle form of boasting. James was talking to people who were boasting about what they planned to do in the future without referencing God about the future. These people were acting as if they held the future in their hands when the truth is God holds the future in his hands. Think of it this way. How many of us left for college with our four-year plan set in place? Before those four years were done, our plan was completely changed. When we talk about our plans for the future, but we don't reference God by saying, "These are my plans. I will only be able to accomplish them if God wills." We are acting as if we hold the future in our hands, when God is the one who holds the future in his hands. He is the only one who can make accomplishing our plans possible.

Another form of subtle boasting is not praying before we eat. When we pray before a meal, we thank God for the food. It is a time to pause and recognize that many people in this world have nothing to eat. People in Sudan, China, Ukraine, and many other places have no guarantee of a next meal. Before we eat, we should pause and thank God for our food since he provided it. When we fail to pray and thank God for our food, it is subtly acting as if we provide the food instead of God providing the food. Failing to pray before we eat is a subtle form of boasting.

A famous boaster was Jack LaLanne. You may remember him. He was a fitness guru. At age 45, he did 1,000 push ups and 1,000 chin ups in one hour and 22 minutes. At age 62,



he swam the length of the Golden Gate Bridge while handcuffed and towing a 1,000-pound boat with his mouth. At age 70, he swam 1 mile while towing 70 boats while handcuffed and shackled on his feet. At age 96, he gave an interview where he claimed he was in such good shape that he planned to live forever. Shortly after the interview, he contracted pneumonia and passed away.

He acted as if he held the future. Only God holds the future. He was boasting about his health. It doesn't matter how many vitamins you take or how much time you spend at the YMCA. God gives us our days and determines the length of our days. When Jack Lalanne quipped about living forever, he was promising what he could not deliver. When we speak about our plans for the future without reference to God's sustaining grace or we act as if the meal in front of us was something we provided by our own power and strength, we are doing the same thing.

**Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.
Proverbs 27:1 (ESV)**

Boasting is stealing glory that belongs to God.

One of the ways people boasting is by taking credit for something that belongs to someone else. In the academic world, it is called plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered a serious breach of integrity. Many colleges will fail a student if they catch plagiarism. Yet, plagiarism is common. Plagiarism doesn't just happen in the academic world. It also happens in music and movies.

Many of us know the Beach Boys' song "Surfing USA." What most of us don't know is that the song is almost an exact copy of Chuck Berry's song "Sweet

Little Sixteen.” Surfing USA so closely resembles Chuck Berry’s song that he was added as a co-writer of the song and given royalties from the song.

If we are offended when people plagiarism a school assignment or a song without giving proper credit when credit is due, how do you think God feels when we boast of things we have done and don’t give God when really he is the one behind all of our success? That is plagiarizing when we take credit for God’s work in our lives and act as if we accomplished things on our own strength.

The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ Judges 7:2 (ESV)

You may remember the context of this verse. Gideon had too many men to go into battle with the Midianites. God knew that if he gave Gideon and his men victory in the battle, they would give themselves the credit for the win, instead of giving God the credit. To ensure they gave God the credit, God whittled down Gideon’s army to 300 men. The Hebrew text tells us it was the 300 most incompetent men, not the 300 best men God gave Gideon. That way, when they won, the credit would go to God, who is the one who clearly deserves it. That way, God’s people wouldn’t boast.

Sometimes we wonder why God allows situations in our lives to get desperate. We wonder why it is so hard to get a job. As weeks drag into months, we spend more time on our knees as we grow desperate. We are calling out to God for rescue. Then, at the last moment, the job we need comes our way. Why does God wait until the last minute to provide those things? Why doesn’t he provide answers to prayer the first time we pray? Why does he often wait until we are desperate before he answers our prayers? The answer relates to boasting. If

God answered our prayers instantly, we would begin to think we were the one providing ourselves with a job from our own resourcefulness. God makes us wait to answer our prayers so it is very clear that he is the one answering our prayer. The honor and glory go to him. We will not boast and take credit to ourselves when the credit really belongs to God.

This is one of the reasons I have a great appreciation for Christians in professional sports who begin every television interview by giving God the credit for any success they experienced on the athletic field. In a world that wants to give people glory, it is wise for Christians to take every opportunity to avoid boasting and begin a television interview by giving God the glory.

Even our salvation is by Jesus alone so that none of us can boast. All we can do is trust in Jesus to save us. the only thing we contribute to our salvation is the sin from which we need to be saved. Our salvation is all by Jesus and only by Jesus. God knew he had to make our salvation that way. If any part of our salvation was up to us, we would boast about it taking glory to ourselves when it really belongs to God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)

Boasting is unloving toward people.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 1 Corinthians 13:4 (ESV)

1 Corinthians 13 is a chapter about love. In that chapter, Paul says that when we focus on ourselves and our accomplishments, and what we have done

in our conversations, it can be unloving to other people. It can encourage jealousy and envy in others.

This brings us to social media. I am not opposed to social media. I think we must realize social media is narcissistic. It encourages us to focus on ourselves and constantly post about ourselves. It encourages us to portray a picture-perfect life instead of share what is really happening in our life. Social media encourages boasting about what we do or what we have done.

The posts I struggle with most usually happen in January. It is when I am shoveling out a six foot snow drift and my shovel breaks. I come inside and check my news feed. There is a friend of mine posting from the Caribbean complaining about running out of sunscreen. The posts show their tan lines. Those kind of posts can be unloving toward other people. It is people just thinking about themselves and what they are doing that other people are not able to do.

As a family we have thought about this. Our daughter, Deanna, has done well in college track. It is fun to repost school news about her record. We are talking about how we can post in such a way that is not boastful, that gives the glory to God, not to Deanna. When we repost news about her, we want to mention God or Jesus in the post and give him the credit for any success she enjoys.

I am not saying we can't post good things to social media. I am saying that as Christians, we need to be strategic about what we post and how we speak. Instead of giving glory to ourselves on social media, we should use social media

an an opportunity to give glory to our God who is the source of every good thing in our lives.

We should boast about what God has done for us.

In all this, there is a time when we should boast. It is not boasting in what we have done. We should boast in what God has done for us. Anything that we do is nothing in comparison to what God has done for us through Jesus.

My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Psalm 34:2 (ESV)

We should boast in the Lord, not in ourselves.

Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.” Jeremiah 9:23–24 (ESV)

Paul says the same thing in the New Testament.

“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 10:17 (ESV)

This week, let us not boast about ourselves and all we have done when in conversations with others. That can lead to an overinflated ego. Our boasting on social media is often unloving to others. In humility, let us take a genuine interest in others needs and others lives. On social media, and in our conversations, let us give God the credit for every good thing we experience.

While we want to avoid boasting about what we have done we want to boast about our great God and what he has done for us through Jesus. That is the one thing we should talk about, but it is one of the things we forget to boast about. We know God. That God loves us. God has completely forgiven us. God

has made us into a new person. God has given us the truth in a world filled with confusion. Jesus changed my life. I will boast about that instead of myself.

What does the Bible say about flattery?

Flattery is using compliments to manipulate people to our advantage.

Complimenting someone is saying a kind word to build someone up.

Flattery is saying a kind word to someone to manipulate them for your purposes.

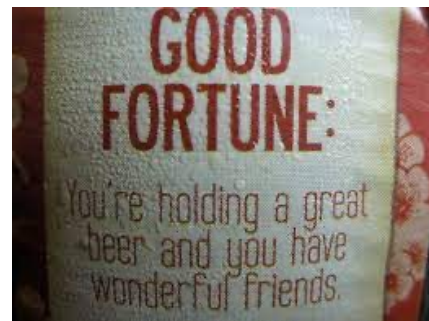
Flattery differs from a genuine compliment in its motivation. A genuine compliment has no self-serving motivation in it. Flattery is a compliment with self-serving motivation. It is complimenting someone else to use them for your own purposes.

Here are four reasons we use flattery.

1. **People speak in a flattering way to get attention.** Sometimes people tell others what a good job they did in the Sunday School lesson or how hard they pushed in a workout to get attention. They want the person they flatter to pay attention to them. Some people are so attention-starved that they compliment others so that other people will take an interest in them. These kind of flattering compliments are not genuine. They are self-serving.
2. **People speak in a flattering way to solicit compliments.** Few women would be so forward and ask another woman to compliment her on her new clothes. Instead of a woman asking someone to compliment her, she will compliment another lady about her outfit in hopes that the other woman will return the compliment to her about her outfit. The motivation for those kind of

compliments are not genuine. They are self-serving. It is flattery. It is complimenting others so others will compliment me.

- 3. People speak with flattering words to seduce.** This is the most common form of flattery. The flatterer tells the woman at the office that she is beautiful. He compliments her creativity and style. While there may be truth to the flatterer's words, he is not speaking in a genuine way but instead using his words words to seduce. He is trying to move the woman at the office emotionally closer to him. Flattery isn't just used in sexual seduction. Flattery is so potent it is used in sales. As I studied flattery, I read about flattery in advertising. Some products do not market the virtues of what they sell. They market by flattery by telling people that only those with an excellent sense of fashion would purchase their clothes. Only the most discerning people will drive a certain brand of luxury car. They flatter consumers because flatter is such an effective tool of manipulation. In 2010, a Belgian Beer company tried to use flattery in advertising.



They printed their beer bottles with a label that said, "You're holding a great beer and you have wonderful friends." Buying their beer didn't give anyone wonderful friends, but because everybody wants good friends, they put that flattery on the label to sell more beer.

- 4. People speak with flattering words to gain respect.** All of us like it when someone is fun to be around. We like it when others do kind things for us and

say kind things to us. Unfortunately, some speak gracious words to us to worm their way into our lives and use us for their own purposes. They aren't trying to earn our respect or time. They are trying to use flattery to microwave respect. Folks, there are no shortcuts to true respect. It has to be earned. Let me give you an example of what this looks like. A few years ago, a man visited the church. After the sermon, he approached me and complimented me on the message. Every pastor likes to hear they did a good job on their sermon. He told me he just moved to town. He was looking for a church and after that Sunday, he thought he found the right church. He gave me his number and asked if we could get together for coffee that week. He even posted a nice review about CrossWinds online. Things looked great. Then I tried calling him. I called multiple times, that week, but he never took my call or returned my call. Later I learned he found another church and began attending that church. It is fine for him to find and attend another church. What struck me was how he was so warm toward me that Sunday, then he dropped me like a sack of potatoes once he decided he didn't need me in his life. As I told Cindy, it felt like all those kind words were empty. It was just flattery. It came from a heart that wanted to use me. It felt like he didn't genuinely care about CrossWinds or me.

Let's see what the Bible says about flattery.

Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the Lord 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?" Psalm 12:2-4 (ESV)

This Psalm considers flatter a form of lying. It is dishonesty. Flattery comes from a double heart, not a pure heart. The Psalmist asks God to cut off everyone who flatters with their lips.

For there is no truth in their mouth; their inmost self is destruction; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Psalm 5:9 (ESV)

The term for flattery in this verse literally means slick speech, a smooth tongue. Flatters are slick talkers. Be very careful about people who take an unnatural or unexplained interest in you. Flatters are at work leading people astray on the Internet. We all know the stories of a man and woman that meet online in a chat room. The person on the other side says flattering words and it leads people astray. This happened to one of my best friends. He was going through a difficult season in his marriage. His wife met someone on line. That man said all the right words. You are so wonderful. You are amazing. You are the best. She bought the flattering words and left her husband for the slick talker she met on the Internet.

A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. Proverbs 29:5 (ESV)

A flatterer does not genuinely care about people. They care about themselves. They use their sweet words to get what they want and trip people up. We all know the stories of lonely people who meet someone of the opposite sex online. They say such gracious words to them. The flatterer cultivates a relationship between them. It is predictable what happens next. The person overseas then begins asking for money. They hope they have flattered the lonely person enough so they send it to them. They may even ask for help coming to America. Once they come to America, they drop the lonely person they met

online like a pile of bricks. They didn't care about the person. They just used flattering words to use the person to get what they wanted.

We are to encourage people with genuine words, not flattering ones.

With all this talk on flattery, and the danger of engaging in it, does that mean we shouldn't compliment other people? Does that mean we shouldn't encourage other people? Absolutely not! The Bible wants us to be generous with kind words. We just have to speak them from a pure heart, not a self-serving one.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)

What does the Bible say about exaggeration?

Exaggeration is altering the details of a story to make it more sensational.

Exaggeration comes from an overinflated ego, a proud heart. It is not being content with our average life. Instead, we stretch the details so it appears to others that we have an abnormally exciting life. We want people to think we are better than we really are.

Why do we exaggerate?

1. **We exaggerate to make ourselves look better.** Have you ever told a story when you realized you were losing your audience's interest? Almost subconsciously, you began adding more zip to the narrative. What was a stubbed toe turns into a broken foot. Our lives become better than they actually are because we want to appear more exciting.
2. **We exaggerate to threaten when we are angry.** When our children make us angry, we exaggerate. The angry parent, in the heat of the moment, promises

to ground their son or daughter for a month. About 30 minutes later, the grounding is reduced to two hours. Why do we exaggerate when we are angry? We want to appear bigger and badder than we actually are. The problem is that exaggeration is lying. It is not telling the truth.

Exaggeration erodes trust.

Trust is essential to every healthy relationship. If you can't trust someone, you can't work with someone. When we exaggerate what we can do or what we have done, we destroy people's in our lives and our words. If we often exaggerate when we are angry, our kids won't take us seriously when we are angry. They know we lie at those times. When we exaggerate the good things we have done, eventually nobody trusts us or believes us.

There is a man I met at the gym. I talk to him regularly. He is new in the community and is having a house built. The problem is many of the contractors exaggerated to him about what they could do and by when they could do it. Since they exaggerated to him, he feels he can no longer trust anything they say.

Conclusion

This week, we should take pride in our work. We should take some basic pride in our looks. The problem is that apart from Jesus, our pride will overinflate making us arrogant. Even with Jesus in our life, it is still easy to become prideful. When our egos become too big. It is easy to speak boastfully, use flattery, and speak with exaggeration.

Let us avoid boasting. In conversations, let us focus on the interests of others, not just on ourselves. Care about what is important to other people. When

we plan for the future, it is important to say we can only accomplish our plans if God is behind them. When we do speak about ourselves on Facebook, it is important to give God the credit for every good thing that takes place in our lives and not just focus on ourselves and our accomplishments. God is the source of all our good gifts. When we speak, while we should be hesitant to boast about ourselves, we should not be hesitate to boast about Jesus and all God has done for us through him.

Let us also avoid flattery. If we have an overinflated ego, everything we do will be to serve ourselves, not other people. Let us compliment and encourage people this week but let us speak kind words without self-serving motives.

Let us avoid exaggeration. Remember exaggeration is a form of lying that comes from wanting others to think we are better than we are and more exciting than we look. Let us not exaggerate. Let us simply speak the truth so people trust our words instead of doubt them.

Pray

Jesus, we just want to confess that in this world, it is so easy to speak boastfully about ourselves and what we have done without giving any credit to you for the good things in our life. When we have done those things, we ask your forgiveness. This week, may we take every opportunity, especially when we are posting on social media, to credit you for every good things. Every good thing have in our life comes from you.

Forgive us when we flatter and speak with double motives. May we genuinely desire to love and encourage others without using other people to serve ourselves.

Forgive us for the many time we exaggerate to make our lives appear more exciting than they are. Forgive us for how we stretch the truth, which is form of deception that erodes the trust of our words. Jesus takes our lives and our words. Keep us humble. May our words and our lives bring honor and glory to you. Amen.



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