

## Elder Bobby Willis



Proverbs 29:5, “**A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet.**”

It has been said, “*Flattery will get you everywhere.*” Flatter your wife and she smiles and gives you a hug. Flatter your kids and they giggle and are happy. Flatter your mother and she shrugs her shoulders and denies every word you said to be true. Flatter your father and he will wonder what you have been up to. When we compliment our kids or grandkids, it is a good thing as it expresses our love for them and our joy at their accomplishments.

However, flatter your neighbor and you could be spreading “**a net for his feet.**” Notice that it did not say it was your feet that would have a problem with a net, but rather your neighbor’s feet. Simply put; it will cause him problems. But, why is this so? In looking at definitions dealing with flattery, we find the following:

1. ‘To praise someone in order to make them feel attractive or important, sometimes in a way that is not sincere.’
2. In flattering yourself - ‘to believe something good about yourself although it might not be true.’ Can be result of someone else’s flattery to you.
3. Flattering to deceive: ‘to give the appearance of being better than the true situation.’

\*\*\* Notice the difference when we look at the word compliment:

1. An expression of praise, commendation, or admiration.
2. A formal act or expression of civility, respect, or regard.
3. To give honor when due.

Compliments are intended to be sincere and are commonly thought to be genuine. Flattery on the other hand, is thought to be un-genuine or lacking in sincerity. A compliment can make the one receiving it feel they are doing something right and to press on, where flattery can give a false feeling of pride which makes them think more highly of themselves than they should.

Loving compliments can cause a simple response of joy and contentment in the heart of the one being complimented if they are able to understand it is done in love and admiration. One example to your wife would be: **“Honey, that dress really looks good on you”**, or, **“Your hair looks great today.”** Or, telling your children or grandchildren how proud you are of them for their accomplishments in life.

When a man flatters his neighbor (remember that neighbors can be any number of different individuals), Solomon is indicating the problems which can occur by his expression of **“spreadeth a net for his feet.”** What this indicates is PRIDE. Flattery to a neighbor can become a form of ‘puffing him up’, or making him feel he is better than everyone else. Pride can even lead one to not honor God. David alludes to this in Psalm 10:4, **“The wicked through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”**

We must be careful who we flatter as not to cause them to think too highly of themselves (Romans 12:3). Solomon explains what happens when pride takes hold of a person in Proverbs 16:18, **“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”** None of us should want to be the root cause of someone falling as a result of our flattery bringing forth pride. Solomon’s proverb in Proverbs 29:5 is not aimed at our children or grandchildren, or our parents. It is aimed at those whose ego would allow your flattery to bring about their falling into self-centered pride which is a sin. **Think About It!**