

A mini book by
W. N Vincent

Handling the Praise of Man

for Believers &
Music Ministers



By W.N Vincent

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

This material is copyrighted ©2021 by W.N Vincent and The Music Institute [TMI]. All Rights Reserved. No information provided in this material should be reproduced, transmitted, or copied, without the express permission of *W.N Vincent* and *The Music Institute [TMI]*.

Cover Design by Unitrix Resources Nigeria
“Propagating the Kingdom through Media”
+234 70 6724 0506, +234 80 2304 7602
www.unitrixresources.com.ng

Copyright ©2021 W.N Vincent and The Music Institute [TMI]. All Rights Reserved

INTRODUCTION

The subject of 'The Praise of Man' is a very much talked about topic. Truthfully, we all want to receive some praise, accolade, or acknowledgment, especially when we do something great.

I have had those moments where I craved in my heart that people would just admit that I was good at something or give me some awesome credits. After all, it would do so much good to my public image if several people just came out in the open and said, "*He is one of the best I have met*".

Even through scriptures, we see Paul advising Timothy regarding who should lead in the church;

"Moreover, he must have a good report of himself."

1 Tim. 3:7

Praise in itself is not bad! In fact, it simply points out to you what you may be doing right, according to the set standards and values.

But the sooner we realize that receiving praise from men, which is a good thing, can harm us, we would become more careful when we see or hear men come to sing our praise.

John Calvin defines '*the fear of man*' as constantly seeking the approval and praises of man.

No wonder the Bible says in *Proverbs 29:25*;

"The fear of man is a snare... "

In his book, *Dealing With the Rejection and Praise of Man*, Bob Sorge wrote,

"Rejection from other people can distress, wound, and imprison the soul. Equally harmful, the praise of man is also a snare, capable of disqualifying God's servants from their highest inheritance."

I want to briefly show you how such a beautiful act like receiving praises from men can harm you as a Believer (specifically as a music minister), and how you can guard your life and ministry against its negative effects.

Before we dive into this, read the word of John Piper,

*"Not all getting is good, so we have the
word "greed." And some giving is bad;
so we have the word "bribe."*

Therefore praise, which always involves a giving and a getting, may not always be good. It may be flattery."

HANDLING THE PRAISE OF MAN

Sometime last year (2020), many young music ministers wanted to be Lawrence Oyor and Theophilus Sunday because of the results they saw in the ministries of these men.

This year (2021), many of these young music ministers have switched allegiance. They now want to be the next GUC.

If they are asked, you'll find that they love the testimony of these great music ministers, which is good, but deep down you will find out that they want to be the next 'big thing'.

This is also a good desire.

But the issue is the motive. Why do we want to be the next big thing?

Why do we want to be the next person in the spotlight?

Motive.

The wrong motive makes us do EVERYTHING with the mindset of getting men's attention, - men's praise. And not long after we become men-pleasers.

We need to understand early in ministry that we do not rise off the praises of men.

Wait!

In the physical, it may seem so. After all, that's how publicity works right? Put your work out there, people see it and they talk about you, then you make progress.

But no. That's not the full story. According to the technology of God's Kingdom, there is a power that makes things work. The fame of Jesus only spread abroad after he received power (of the Spirit) in the wilderness, not after his first miracle.

His fame had spread abroad **EVEN BEFORE HIS FIRST MIRACLE WAS PERFORMED.**

Big Question!

- What did men hear about him?
- What did men see about him that made him famous, even without releasing a music single or that great album?

There is a power that makes people famous and influential, and it is not necessarily in the praises and referral of men.

The Praises of men can change with their mood or feelings towards you, but when you have the power that makes for influence, **YOU CAN'T BE REJECTED.**

I thought I should say this first, before sharing the main part.

LESSON ONE

ENEMIES AND PRAISE

If you seek the praise of man, know this; There is Praise that will give you more enemies than it will project your strengths. For this, you must know when to cover your head in public.

Be sensitive to the atmosphere and motives of people so they do not praise you into trouble. Know how to discern people after the spirit and not just the flesh.

The other day, my father wanted to send a PUBLIC congratulatory message to a man who just won an election in ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH, Rivers State.

My father asked me to go through the congratulatory message he had prepared, and after reading it, I had to advise him to remove some lines.

Why?

If such words in the form of 'praise and congratulation' get out, even the man's superiors may pick a fight with him.

Imagine going into an office and calling the least the greatest in the face of the 'kings.'

We all know what happened to Joseph and his beautiful coat at the end of the day.

There is Praise that will give you more enemies than helpers.

The truth is, some of the people who give you certain public praise do not know how harmful their praise could be to you. They do it so innocently and in all sincerity. This is why it is your responsibility to guard your head.

"Saul killed 1,000, but David killed 10,000". Do you remember this song? It may have been an innocent song telling of the exploits of young David, but that was the start of David's real battles.

Don't seek or accept every praise, especially in the public space. Learn how to guard your head in public.

LESSON TWO

THE TRIVIALITY OF PRAISE

They said to Jesus, "Come, let us make you our king, - the king of the Jews. For you contend efficiently with the scribes, Pharisees, and the likes. It will be an honor to be led by you". John 6:15 (inferred)

But He declined. He ran away from amongst them. Oh! What a fool he was! He missed His opportunity to be great. Right?

But in the end, they saw His true potential, - His true destiny as written before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Jesus wasn't sent to be the King of the Jews. He was the King of the whole world.

Dear friends, please know this, there is Praise that can keep you small. I need you to understand that there is more to YOU. You're not just the best singer in your church.

That may be your current level; that may sound good and ok, but is that all that there is to you?

There are choir members who never make progress beyond their choir because they are the ones who win a particular award in church, EVERY YEAR.

Listen to me, you're more than a local champion.

If you are comfortable in your locality when God has wired you for more, THEN YOU ARE SMALL and YOUR MENTALITY IS SMALL!

You will never grow that way.

Dear Minister of God, understand that there are people who will praise you at every stage of your life. Even if you live a life of mediocrity, some people will celebrate that level because they haven't even risen to that level you occupy.

Some people will praise you from the point of their INABILITY. Because they cannot do it, they crown the one who can as King, EVEN IF YOU ARE MEDIOCRE. As far as your level of mediocrity is better than theirs.

If you release a song that is badly arranged and poorly produced, there are still people who will say to you, "*Your song blessed me*".

This is not always an encouragement. It's because they lack the knowledge to tell if a song is really good.

They can only relate to that level of mediocrity.

On the other hand, some people wouldn't sing your praise because your ministry (song) doesn't reflect excellence.

If getting the praises of men were everything, some people would have remained small.

if you must grow beyond where you currently are, do these three basic things;

- Pay attention to what men praise you about. It points to you some things you may be getting right.
- Pay attention to what is not said. Some men lack the courage to critique you because you're the king amongst the blind. You need to be open to hear and embrace the '*but*' that comes after '*you did well*'.
- Don't define your life's trajectory by the praises of men, or the lack of it.

Learn from Jesus. Know your purpose. Know your story, and own it. Don't allow men to praise you and keep you small.

LESSON THREE

THE SUBTLETY OF PRAISE

A teenage boy walked up to his father and began to praise him; *"You are the best father in the world! There's nothing I have ever asked of you that you have not provided. I love you, daddy."*

This produced a wide smile on his father's face, and he gave him a warm hug.

Immediately, the man's wife walked into the room in search of the boy, like a lion ready to consume its prey.

On seeing his mother, the boy quickly hid behind his father in an attempt to hide from his mother.

It was then the man realized what had played out before his wife came in. The praise his teenage son had just showered on him was for a reason; to find a safe spot before his mother found him.

Dear friend, I need you to know that, *there is Praise that is deceptive.*

Do not listen to every praise. Learn to discern men beyond the physical.

The Devil came to Jesus and said to Him, *"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"* Mathew 4:6

In this simple statement was subtle praise for Jesus. He pointed out to Jesus how great He was.

He called him *'Son of God'* and also pointed out that he had *'authority over the angels'*.

But Jesus didn't lose His head over such tricks.

Some people will praise you simply because of what they stand to gain from your ministry.

Some men will praise you because they want to put you into a corner where you will lose your Christian values.

For example, some record labels will tell you,

"You're an awesome singer, and you can really do a lot more with your music if you drop certain things and add certain things. If you can do this, you will go very far."

And with this, you will lose every Godly standard and value that you have.

Don't fall for such deception. Hold on to your standards and values and don't be moved by such praise.

Be wiser. Guard your heart.

LESSON FOUR

PRAISE AND UNHOLY APPETITES

Here's a short story.

Acts 16:16-18

Paul and Silas went into a city to evangelize. On getting there, a girl revealed to the city who they were; "*These are men of the Most High, Listen to them*" she cried.

This is a ministerial breakthrough, right? God set up a helper for them, even before they arrived, right? Another partner in ministry, perhaps?

The only challenge was, this girl was possessed by an evil spirit.

This Praise and the public announcement went on for days until Paul (being sensitive to the source of the prophecy, and the target of the Praise) became fed up and cast the spirit out.

Big Question.

If this was your experience as a Music minister, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

In this last lesson, I need you to understand that, *there is Praise that will distract you from God's plan for your life.*

You need to beware and be discerning.

Such Praise is usually targeted at your appetites.

Dear Minister of God, I know we have many cravings; many appetites. What do you crave for?

- For some of us, in this era of social media publicity, we get great satisfaction from likes and comments on social media, and when that video isn't getting the attention we desire, we are restless. Likes and comments are what fuel our passion and desire for ministry. For this, the devil can tilt your ministry. He'll just arrange for numerous praises from far and wide and you will go off track.
- For some, we love it when people walk up to us after a ministration and say, "*Sir/Ma, you're good. You are a blessing. In fact, you were the only minister who blessed me in this program*". And when we don't get such commendations, we go home asking ourselves, "what went wrong?"

Dear Man of God, the validity of your ministry is not determined by public appraisal or the lack of it.

The fact that many rejected Jesus didn't make his ministry fake. You see, the appetites are many, and if we haven't dealt with our appetites, the slightest praise, or the lack of it, can knock us off course.

This is why, as a minister, you need to first deal with your appetites at your budding stages in ministry, before you ask for power and influence.

Let me share a secret with you.

I've been praying a singular prayer for over two years, and it is not been to become famous, and the likes. Rather it has been this, *"Lord, Help me to keep my heart stayed on you."*

Friends, if you don't deal with your appetites and excesses today, an award or accolade will have the ability to push you away tomorrow, without any resistance from within.

Truth is, if some of us had the experience of Paul and Silas, we may take it as, *"Finally, God has helped me. The world has seen my light"*.

But not Paul.

The Bible says, as the girl kept singing their praise for days, Paul became greatly annoyed. These were men who had died to vainglory and cheap praise.

Beloved, we need to die to the dangerous cravings of cheap praise. It is not every Praise (both public and private) that you should accept.

There is Praise that is targeted at feeding your unhealthy appetites, and unless you are sensitive and deal with those appetites, soon you will go off course.

PURIFYING YOUR MOTIVES

"It is sad that for now the joy of praise is so closely linked to the sin of pride. But it will not always be so. There will come a day when we will be transformed into the image of our Lord. Pride and vanity will vanish. Our delight in each other will be complete and our praise unrestrained. All of this will resound to the glory of God like the praise of a painting to the glory of the artist."

- John Piper

We need to allow God to purify our motive for doing ministry. We need to allow God to purify our motives for praying the prayers we pray.

We need to ask God to deliver us from our unhealthy appetites.

If our motives for doing ministry are corrupt, we are already in trouble because we would not be able to discern what is not of God, as far as it satisfies our appetites, - our pride.

Not all that looks and sounds good is from God.

But God will help us, friends.

We will not fail.

Be sensitive, minister of God.

PRAYER

I pray for someone, your destiny will not be swallowed in, or cut short by the praises of Men, targeted at bringing you down, unknowing to you.

I pray that, by the mercy of God, your crown will be covered until it is time for your revealing, and the Holy Spirit will keep you focused until you mature to fulfill your life's prophecy.

In Jesus name, Amen.

*Best Regards,
W.N Vincent*

ABOUT TMI



The Music Institute [TMI] is a Christian Community of musicians who are burdened to reach out to Christian Musicians across the world, providing resources to help them grow and stay relevant in God's call for their lives.

We are concerned about dispensing the kingdom knowledge and values that make for the effective Music Ministry of the Christian Musician.

We train Christian Musicians on Music, Ministry, Leadership, and Christian Lifestyle, which are our core areas, via our workshops and seminars, both physical and virtual (online).

We also provide resource materials in the form of videos, audio, books, etc. which cut across our core areas.

You can connect with us on our social media handles;

Facebook: The Music Institute TMI

Instagram: themusicinstitute_tmi

You can also join our WhatsApp Community via the link

<https://bit.ly/TheMusicInstitutetmi> Or Visit our website www.themusicinstitute101.com

Copyright © 2021