

**The Pilgrim's Progress**  
**Chapter 17 – "The Pilgrims Meet the Flatterers"**  
**October 29, 2014**

*"Many tickle with one hand, to strike with the other - pleasing in order to betray. The flatterer is a vile reptile; like a boa-constrictor, he covers his victim with saliva, and then proceeds to swallow him."*  
*Charles Spurgeon*

I. Context

A. Definitions

1. Flatter: to **praise excessively** especially from motives of self-interest.
  2. Straight and narrow path: represents the **revealed will** of God for the Christian life.
  3. Why is the Flatterer described as a dark man with a very light robe?
  4. Who does the Flatterer represent? **False teaching.**
  5. What does the net represent? **Confusion brought about by the error of false teaching.**
- B. Christian and Hopeful at the fork in the road
1. They were previously in similar situations
  2. They recently received counsel from the Shepherds
  3. They only "thought" about the Way

II. The Flatterer

A. Warnings from Scripture

1. (Mt 7:15-20) Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous **wolves**.
2. (Acts 20:28-30) Fierce **wolves** will come in among the Ephesians.
3. (2 Cor 11:12-15) **Disguise** themselves as apostles of Christ and servants of righteousness.
4. (Jude and 2 Peter 2) **Parallel Passages** False prophets will secretly bring in destructive **heresies** following their sensuality and in their greed they will exploit Christians with **false** words.
5. (Rom 6:18) Serve their own appetites, and by **smooth** talk and **flattery** they deceive the hearts of the naïve.
6. (Phil 3:17-19) Their end is destruction and their god is their **belly**.

"Too often the god is Mammon, who is as degraded a deity as any of them. Such turn religion into a means of gain, and would sell Jesus himself for silver. The sin of Judas is one of which we may say, "So do they unto this day." Judas is an apostle, he listens to the Master's words, he preaches at the Master's command, and he works miracles in the Master's name; he also keeps the bag and manages the finance for Christ's little company, and he does it so carefully and economically that what he filches for himself is not missed, and he remains in good repute. Judas professes to serve Jesus, but all the while he is really serving himself, for secretly he abstracts from the treasury somewhat for his own pocket. "He had the bag and kept that which was put therein." There are such still in the churches of God: they do not actually steal, but they follow Jesus for what they can make or get out of him and his disciples. The symbols of their worship are the loaf and the fish. Now, this is as degrading a form of worship as the adoration of graven images. Gain is the god of many in all congregations: they seek Jesus, not because they care for his words, but because they eat of the loaves. They fear the Lord, but they serve other gods." **Oct 2,1881** CHS

- B. Exhortation from Scripture (1 Thess 5:21) **Test** everything and hold fast to what is good.
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III. The Decision

A. What Christian and Hopeful didn't do (they thought only)

1. Pray
2. Look at their map (Scripture)
3. Heed the warning of the Shepherds
4. Rightly judge the Flatterer

B. Practicing which Spiritual Disciplines can help us in similar circumstances?

- ✓ 1. Bible Intake (Hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, meditating and applying)
- ✓ 2. Prayer
- ✓ 3. Worship
- ✓ 4. Fasting
- ✓ 5. Silence and Solitude
- ✓ 6. Journaling
- ✓ 7. Learning

C. What should we do when we are trying to discern God's will?

1. Subject our own thoughts to God's word
2. Subject our friend's thoughts to God's word
3. Have our minds saturated with the mind of God.

IV. Next Week: Chapter 18 "Hopeful Tells of His Conversion" and Chapter 19 "The Pilgrims Deal with Ignorance"

