

Luke 20:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

Analysis

The spies' flattery begins with **Master** (Διδάσκαλε, Didaskale, 'Teacher'), feigning respect. **We know that thou sayest and teachest rightly**—ironically, they speak truth while intending deceit. **Neither acceptest thou the person of any** (οὐ λαμβάνεις πρόσωπον, ou lambaneis prosōpon)—literally 'you do not receive the face,' meaning you show no partiality.

But teachest the way of God truly (τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπ' ἀληθείας, tēn hodon tou theou ep' alētheias)—'the way of God in truth.' Their accurate theological assessment becomes the setup for their trap. They acknowledge Jesus's fearless truthfulness, then pose a question designed to make that truthfulness politically fatal. Satan often quotes truth to serve lies.

Historical Context

Flattery was a common rhetorical device in Mediterranean culture, used both sincerely and manipulatively. The phrase 'accepting the person' (showing partiality) was a Hebrew idiom (nasa panim) that Greek-speaking Jews translated literally. Impartiality was considered essential for true prophets and teachers.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How can acknowledging someone's integrity become a tool of manipulation rather than genuine honor?
2. When have you used flattery to set up someone for failure or embarrassment?
3. What does this passage teach about the danger of weaponizing theological compliments?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν λέγεις Διδάσκαλε οἴδαμεν ὅτι

And **they asked** **him** **saying** **Master** **we know** **that**
G2532 G1905 G846 G3004 G1320 G1492 G3754

όρθως λέγεις καὶ διδάσκεις· καὶ οὐ λαμβάνεις

rightly **saying** **And** **teachest** **And** **neither** **acceptest thou**
G3723 G3004 G2532 G1321 G2532 G3756 G2983

πρόσωπον ἀλλ' ἐπ' ἀληθείας τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ

the person **of any but** **G1909** **truly** **G3588** **the way** **G3588** **of God**
G4383 G235 G225 G3598 G2316

διδάσκεις·

teachest

G1321

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 22:16 (References God): And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of

God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

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