

# WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

**Hebrews 10:24-25**

➤ **John 14:16**

# SAM CRABTREE

“Affirmation is truthfully declaring by complimentary word or action the goodness of something. Good affirmation attests, certifies, or confirms that which honors God, that which is morally upright.”

➤ (*Practicing Affirmation*, p. 132)

# ANOTHER DEFINITION

Affirmation is the act of glorifying God by acknowledging reflections of God's image in the lives of others. Affirmation of others reflects the character of God and is a means by which to glorify God.

Affirmation not only gives glory to God, it encourages and blesses the persons being affirmed.

# JOHN PIPER

“When our mouths are empty of praise for others, it is probably because our hearts are full of love for self.”

➤ (From the Forward to *Practicing Affirmation*)

# C. S. LEWIS

“I had not noticed how the humblest, and at the same time most balanced and capacious, minds, praised most, while the cranks, misfits and malcontents praised least.”

- (From the Forward to *Practicing Affirmation*)
- (*Reflections on the Psalms*, London: G. Bles, 1958, p. 94.)

# JOHN PIPER

“Sam’s book is a healing balm for cranks, misfits, and malcontents who are so full of self they scarcely see, let alone celebrate, the simple beauties of imperfect virtue in others. Or to say it differently, I need this book.”

➤ (From the Forward to *Practicing Affirmation*)

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“The absence of affirmation of God’s handiwork in His people is also a kind of sacrilege—for at least three reasons.

- **First**, it is disobedience to God’s command: “*A woman who fears the LORD is to be praised*” (Prov. 31:30).



# JOHN PIPER

“The absence of affirmation of God’s handiwork in His people is also a kind of sacrilege—for at least three reasons.

- **Second**, it demeans Jesus as though He were stooping to do something unworthy when He says, “*Well done, good and faithful servant*” (Matt. 25:21, 23).

# JOHN PIPER

“The absence of affirmation of God’s handiwork in His people is also a kind of sacrilege—for at least three reasons.

- **Third,** all the works of God are worthy of praise.

# I. THE PRACTICE OF BIBLICAL AFFIRMATION

- 1 Corinthians 14:26
- Romans 15:2
- Proverbs 31:30
- 1 Samuel 2:30
- Romans 13:7
- Hebrews 10:24-25
- 1 Chronicles 29:25
- Daniel 2:37
- Luke 1:28
- Hebrews 11:39
- Matthew 15:28
- Mark 14:9
- Luke 7:9
- Luke 7:28
- Luke 21:3-4
- John 1:47
- Romans 13:7

# SAM CRABTREE

“I am suggesting that we rob God of praise by not pointing out His reflection in the people He has knit together in His image. . . .”

“God is not given the praise He deserves when we ignore or deny the work He is doing in people...”

## SAM CRABTREE

“To fail to commend the character of Christ in people is to fall into the same lackluster indifference of a person who never exclaims what a beautiful morning it is, thereby robbing the Creator of glory He deserves for making that sky, . . .”

“Ultimately God gets the glory through the goodness and faithfulness He grants His people. We should be noting evidence of His grace and affirming it.” (pages 18, 21, 24)

## QUESTION:

*"Is It Wrong to Desire to Be loved and Affirmed by God?"*

SAM CRABTREE

"No. In fact, to *not* want to be loved by God is to be faithless, to expect God to act like something other than God. To be loved by God is good, and he gets the credit for being a glorious lover of the unlovely."

# John Newton

*Amazing grace,  
how sweet the sound,  
that saved a wretch like me.*

# Charles H. Gabriel

*I stand amazed in the presence  
Of Jesus the Nazarene,  
And wonder how He could love me,  
A sinner, condemned, unclean.  
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
Is my Savior's love for me!*



**Isaac Watts wrote:**

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
**Love so amazing, so divine,**  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

# SOME REFRESHING VERSES

- ❑ Proverbs 11:25 (niv)
- ❑ Luke 6:38
- ❑ 2 Timothy 1:16-18

## II. THE POWER OF BIBLICAL AFFIRMATION

☐ Hebrews 12:6, 11

# SAM CRABTREE

- “A shortage of affirmation explains many things, from teenage rebellion to failed marriages.” (p. 54)

# III. THE PATTERN OF BIBLICAL AFFIRMATION

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PATTERN #1:

LET AFFIRMATION STAND  
WITHOUT CORRECTION

# SAM CRABTREE

□ “The sting of a rebuke outweighs the fresh whiff of a bouquet. A person sniffing the flowers when a bee stings quickly forgets the flowers even if the bouquet is very large. If the pattern of corrections is outweighing the affirmations, the sting stays with us, and the corrections keep picking the scab.” (p. 47)

## C. J. MAHANEY TELLS HIS STAFF

*"Three for every one", meaning three affirmations for every criticism. ... For the spouse, parent, pastor, church member, I would want the ratio to be more like five to one, or ten to one."*

(p. 47)



# PATTERN #2

LET AFFIRMATION FLOW  
STEADILY

Acts 4:36; 9:27

# PATTERN #3

- ❑ LET AFFIRMATION  
BE HONEST

# PATTERN #4

## □ MAKE AFFIRMATION GOD-CENTERED

Matthew 15:28

Luke 7:9

Luke 21:3

John 1:47

# Sam Crabtree

“Affirmation should not be a self-esteem free-for-all. Don’t affirm any old thing. Don’t affirm empty trendiness. Don’t stroke the ego. Commend the commendable! Value the valuable! Supremely value the supremely valuable. Worship only Christ, and then commend his image in people.” (p. 29-30)

“... Make us commendable and commenders of the commendable. For Christ’s sake, so be it.”

(p. 33)

## WILLIAM BARCLAY

“One of the highest human duties is the duty of human encouragement. It is easy to laugh at man's ideas; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man who speaks such a word.”

(DAILY STUDY BIBLE, *Letter to the Hebrews*, pg. 137)

## Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider one another in order to **stir up** love and good works, {25} not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting** one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”