

Practicing Affirmation

Practicing Affirmation: Chapter Three

1. On pp. 64-69, Crabtree says that the four characteristics of Good Affirmations are that they are: Detached from Correction, Steady, Honest & God-centered. What stood out from one or more of these characteristics? Any that were specifically convicting in some way?
2. Read the following question from p. 67 & attempt to give an honest answer: “There’s probably not a person reading this book who is thinking, ‘Affirmation is stupid. I’m not going to do this.’ However, if we think we should be doing it, then why aren’t we?”
3. “Yesterday’s refreshment doesn’t refresh permanently. You can’t stockpile freshness” (p. 67) What comes to mind when you hear this quote?
4. On page 69, the author says the following: “We help people be shallow when we focus our compliments on their braiding of hair, wearing of gold, putting on of clothing, sequins, piercings and tattoos (see 1 Pet 3:3-4). Such things are external. Rather, let us pay attention to patterns of character that will emerge from the work of God going on inside a person.” Later on p. 70, he says: “So make your commendations more about character than things like “You’re so cute.” Cute is a weak compliment. Cute comes and cute goes, and for most of us it’s well on its way out. Physical beauty is fleeting (see the rest of this paragraph)... While there is nothing wrong per se in complimenting a smile, it is better to commend cheerfulness.” Do you agree with this? Why or why not? If you don’t agree, how can you still learn from the principle the author is trying to teach? Spend time fleshing this out.
5. Further down on the same page, he cites examples of commending good character even in failure: “... when the casserole is burnt, we can commend the creativity and courage it took to experiment with that new recipe. When the child breaks the window, we can commend him for the honesty to tell us about it. When somebody owns up to an error or a mistake or an accident, we can commend her humility in confessing his or her sense of responsibility in owning up to her actions.” Can you think of a specific (potentially recent) situation in which someone failed where you could offer affirmation?
6. What are the 9 benefits Crabtree says come from affirming others? Which stands out & why?
7. Under his fifth benefit of affirmation, the author says this: “Affirmation changes us before it changes them.” How have you seen this to be true... or if you haven’t yet, how do you desire this to be true for you?

8. In the same benefit (Striving to affirm others puts us in the habit of looking at them positively), he also says: “Affirmation doesn’t require deep insight, just simple sight. And action. See good things and point them out with appreciation.” Take a moment and think of one simple observation in someone worth affirming and share it with the group (Later, share it with the person).

9. Under the eighth benefit, the author talks about using affirmation as a reward, or incentive. Are you motivated by affirmation from others? How can we use affirmation in a way that is gospel-driven rather than performance driven?