

PSALM 15
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GODLY

INTRODUCTION: The outline of the Psalm is very simple:

- I. The Question is Asked: Verse 1.**
- II. The Answer is Given: Verses 2 -5**

I. THE QUESTION: VERSE 1

Verse 1: A Psalm of David. LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

The word “abide” here carries the meaning of sojourning or temporarily staying in the house of God. The word “hill” carries the meaning of a permanent dwelling place or home. The Psalmist is asking the question here who wishes to be in God's house for worship and who wishes to be in the land where God dwells.

The answer of course is the believer during this time who is also obeying the law as well. The saints of this dispensation, obeyed the Old Testament law but were also saved by faith, just as the New Testament believer is during this current dispensation. The difference was, the OT believer looked forward to a future redeemer, who was prophesied but they did not know who that redeemer would be. The OT believer was required to keep the law, that was also a teacher to show them of their need of that redeemer (Galatians 3:24). The NT believer looked back to the cross, knew the redeemer was the Lord Jesus Christ and did not live under the obligation of the OT Mosaic Law.

APPLICATION: Who will want to be in the house of the Lord for worship or wish to be where God has placed them in Life? The Christian will want to be in God's house for all the services and will want to be in the place where God wants them to be for their life.

II. THE ANSWER: VERSES 2-5

A. HIS WALK:

Verse 2: He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

The first subject the Psalmist addresses here is the walk of the righteous: His walk, which is representative of his style or manner of living, is upright, meaning a lifestyle of integrity and sincerity. “Walketh uprightly” is a perfect metaphor to describe the correct lifestyle of the righteous man.

Working righteousness: The words “worketh righteousness” carries the meaning of practicing, committing, and working. This is the righteousness man showing righteousness in his labor and work, not just only talking about it.

Speaking the truth in his heart: This statement carries the meaning of thinking the truth in their heart and mind to themselves, and not thinking one thing and saying another outward. They are not hypocritical. The righteous did not think falsehoods, heresy, or any kind of lies to themselves.

B. HIS SPEECH:

Verse 3a: He that backbiteth not with his tongue.

The word “backbite” means to slander another. Slander is to verbally spread lies about another person. The word “backbite” here is the perfect translation because it carries the meaning of slandering another by going behind their back to do and not in their presence. A good word today that would describe this is “gossip”.

C. HIS ACTIONS:

Verse 3b: nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

The word “reproach” carries the meaning of disgrace or shaming, through exposing something or making that thing open and exposed before others. The righteous here does not disgrace or shame his neighbor, a fellow Jew.

D. HIS VIEWS:

Verse 4: In whose eyes a vile person is contemned;

A vile person here is one who does evil actions based upon his evil thoughts. The word “contemned” carries the meaning of disdain or scorn. This word is where we get the modern word “contempt”. The righteous man despises the wicked man for what he does not for what it has obtained him.

but he honoureth them that fear the LORD.

The righteous man brings honor with “weight” or strength, not in a weak fashion. To “fear the LORD” carries the meaning of reverential respect of the highest magnitude. The context of fear is “awe” of the great power, intelligence, and presence of God.

He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

The righteous man will fulfill his oaths of obligation (contracts, promises, etc.) even if that fulfillment will cause damage or loss to himself.

E. HIS BUSINESS AFFAIRS:

Verse 5a: He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.

The word “usury” we know today as interest, or a return on money that loaned to another party. The children of Israel were prohibited from earning usury on loans of money to fellow Jews.

The words “taketh reward” here is to receive a monetary sum of money to be against an innocent party. Today we would know this as bribery for a false testimony. The righteous would never accept a bribe for a false testimony against an innocent party.

F. HIS REWARD

Verse 5b: He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

The righteous man that practices the above mentioned characteristics shall have stability in his life. This stability is expressed perfectly in the statement “shall never be moved”. In other words, the righteous man will be stable in his life and not “wander” in the aspects of his life.

APPLICATION: All of the above characteristics of the righteous man can be directly applied to the Christian. The relationship of the fellow Jew and the fellow believer is not dissimilar.