



## Psalm 15

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A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> He who walks uprightly,  
And works righteousness,  
And speaks the truth in his heart;

<sup>3</sup> He who does not backbite with his tongue,  
Nor does evil to his neighbor,  
Nor does he take up a reproach  
against his friend;

<sup>4</sup> In whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
But he honors those who fear the LORD;  
He who swears to his own hurt  
and does not change;

<sup>5</sup> He who does not put out his money at usury,  
Nor does he take a bribe  
against the innocent.

He who does these things  
shall never be moved.

**The most important question, v1.** The Holy Spirit introduces the Psalm by indicating that the question of how one should attend worship on earth is closely connected to the question of whether one will be part of the worship in glory. The wording of the Hebrew in the second half of the verse indicates not merely that the hill has a quality of holiness but that Yahweh's holiness is itself the hill in question. In other words, the answer to "how can I properly come to church?" is the same as the answer to "how can I properly come to glory?"

So, there are two great things that are being described here: who Jesus is for us, in our behalf; and, whom Jesus is making us to be for His own sake. For, He is the Holy One, in Whom alone we can come. And, He is producing in us that holiness, without which we cannot come. This Psalm describes Jesus's character as our worthiness to enter glory. And this Psalm describes the character that He produces in us to make us suitable for that glory.

We are created to worship the Lord, and we will either be in that holy company who dwell upon the hill of His holiness, or we shall be tormented forever in Hell. Those are the only two possibilities. The whole of life is a preparation for worship, because being unspotted, that is blameless, is a preparation for worship. It is a prerequisite that is met only in Christ, but it is also the preoccupation of all who come to God through Him (cf. James 1:21–27).

**Answer: not a fool, v2** (cf. Ps 14). There are three parts to this verse. The first is "the one walking blamelessly/perfectly." The second two parts both locate the action "in his heart." The one doing/working righteousness in his heart, and the one speaking truthfully/faithfully in his heart. This sets our acceptable worshiper directly opposite the fool in Psalm 14 (who said *in his heart* that there is no God). It is a great trap to focus only upon what men can see, when God's focus is upon the inner man whom He alone sees.

Who are you, in the secret place of the heart? That question will send you flying to Christ. But if He is ours, and really if we are His, then there will be a work of renovation that is ongoing within us. It is like that perpetual sign outside the Baymont Inn on Hwy 50, "Remodeling to Serve You Better." If that is not perpetually placarded on the marquee sign of your heart, then heaven is not your home.

**Eight indicators of a godly heart, v3–5b.** A godly heart will produce godly behavior, but this Psalm gives us eight particular areas to watch as indicators.

(1) doesn't foot it about with the tongue, v3a. It's an unusual phrase, but the sense seems to be that avoids the temptation to be a busybody, cf. Lev 19:16. It seems to be over against the idea of the heart in the previous verse. Someone who makes a show by their speech before men that is opposite what is true of their heart before God.

(2) doesn't do evil to his neighbor, v3b. The word rendered neighbor here just means someone else. All humans being neighbors in the sense of this phrase, we must be unwilling to do that which is evil against any of them.

(3) nor is a carrier of reproaches against his friend, v3c. the word that is translated friend here comes from the root meaning to be near. It is more of a preposition than a noun. So, there is the sense of violating or rebelling against God's Providence that has put us in a near connection to someone for their good, whereas our conduct turns their proximity to us to their evil. By the Spirit's making the sentence this way we see the two great commandments come together, so that failing to love one's friend is a rebellion against the Providence of God that has put us in proximity to him. The use of the verb "carry" is actually helpful to us, because we have the same concept in the use of a cognate word when it comes to infectious disease. We talk about not even wanting to be a carrier, and that is the same idea here with the gossip or reproach. We are to refuse to listen to it, and to knock it down when we hear it.

(4) despised in his eyes is the rejected one, v4a. The world makes much of appearances, but if our hearts are aimed at the Lord, we will greatly pity the reprobate rather than admire him, regardless of his worldly/earthly attainments.

(5) but the one fearing Yahweh, he honors, v4b. To a believer, there is no one so honorable as another believer, no matter how lowly in the eyes of the world. It is the sentiment, here expressed negatively, by Ian Hamilton: "I have a palpable fear of speaking ill of one elected by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit."

(6) who swears to his own hurt and does not change, v4c. Every lawful promise, however inconvenient, must be kept unless we are willingly released by the party to whom we have promised. Every unlawful promise must be repented of. But heart integrity is often discovered in resisting the temptation to account as unlawful a promise that eventually conflicts with self-interest. How easily the sinful heart makes its own pleasure the measure of morality instead of what pleases the Lord.

(7) his silver, he does not give in usury, v5a. While free market principles can reinforce diligence by appealing to selfishness, they can also expose who our true master is, when we have the opportunity to profit from another's pain. It is sometimes wrong to charge as much as you can possibly get for something, as seen by the Bible's constant warnings and prohibitions against getting whatever interest you can by lending out money. You cannot serve both the Lord and wealth; seeing another's neediness as an opportunity to grow your wealth is the opposite of seeing another's neediness as an opportunity to steward wealth in service of generosity. The heart is often exposed more by having plenty than in a season of scarcity.

(8) a bribe against the innocent, not will he take, v5b. There are not different words in Hebrew for gift and bribe. The godly man knows that his heart is always in danger of being prejudiced; and when he is in a position to make a judgment, he actively resists anything that might prejudice him.

**Access=assurance, v5c.** The question at the beginning of the Psalm has now been answered. The one whose godly heart is evidenced by these godly habits is a genuine worshiper in the tabernacle and has his place on Yahweh's holy hill. But he has more than just access to the holy hill. He is so entrenched there that he cannot be made to totter or slide in the slightest bit.

When the everlasting, almighty God seeks for Himself worshipers, He makes for Himself worshipers in spirit and truth who ascend not to earthly mountain or temple but who have an immovable place on the mountain of His holiness itself (cf. Jn 4:20–24).

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

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Psalm 15 the Psalm of David. Yahweh, who may abide in your Tabernacle. Who may dwell in your Holy Hill. He who walks uprightly. And works righteousness. And speaks the truth in his heart. He who does not backbit with his tongue. Nor does evil to his neighbor.

Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend? In his eyes person is despised. But he honors those who fear your way. He swears to his own hurt and does not change. He does not put out his money at usury. Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent?

He who does these? Shall never be moved. So far the reading of God's Word. Verse 1 asks, what is whether we feel it to be yet or not? The most important question for us. You already who may abide or sojourn in your tabernacle who may dwell in the hill of your holiness.

To put it a little bit more literally as it reads in the original. The very end of the Bible the very end of this world, we hear the dwelling place of God is with man. There are only two places you may end up. You may end up with the dwelling place of God that is with man dwelling in the hill of his holiness as it were into verse 1.

Or you will end up in the lake of fire. Those are the only two destinations. The end of this world. So, it's very important. That we see that these two questions in verse 1 have the same answer in the rest of the psalm. That is to say the right way of coming to God in the days of our sojourning you remember Jacob correcting Pharaoh who really wanted permanence in this life and he says few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage.

Says you need to pilgrimage at the Tabernacle. As one who plans to dwell in the hill of God's holiness and the answer to who may do that. Is the same to both questions. And so as we look at the rest of the psalm and we're getting this answer for who may dwell in the hill of God's holiness, we're also getting instruction for how we are to be living.

Throughout every week as those who at the beginning of the next week plan to come and attend in the public worship of God.

So the Holy Spirit introduces the Psalm by indicating that the question of how one should attend worship on earth. As closely connected to the question of whether one will be parked. Of the worship in glory. There are two great things that are being described here then as he describes the rest of the psalm we know that Jesus is the only worthiness.

That we have for glory, he alone can be our righteousness. And so in the description of the man who answers the question correctly verse one, we have a description of all redeemer. And his perfect righteousness. That is sincere and from the heart. And that is expressed in these behaviors.

But not only is Jesus our worthiness to enter glory, but he is also giving us our fitness. He is making us suitable for that glory that he has earned for us. So we have in the rest of us all not just a picture of what Christ is already like, but also a picture of what Christ is making us like.

We are created to worship the Lord. And Jesus has atoned for us so that we may. And if we belong to him then he is also sanctifying us in view of that day when we will come to the hill of His holiness. So who can do that and the answer is not a fool or the opposite of the Psalm 14 fool you remember the fool says in his heart?

There is no God. And we actually have in verse 2 one who works righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart. The way it's worded in the original. I think that the in his heart is actually distributed over both of the verbs that the working of righteousness begins in the heart.

This fits with Jesus's own kind of answer on the similar question almost the same question with the woman this American woman and John four, She says, do we worship in the mountain or the temple and Jesus' answer? That it's not really either the temple and Jerusalem or the mountain but God himself is spirit may well have in mind the second half of verse one the hill of God's holiness that the place that we have to ascend to to worship.

God properly is a place that you can't take GPS coordinates for. You get there in spirit and in truth and the Father is seeking such worshipers and seeking them by Christ. And so it's a righteousness that goes to the heart. And starts in the heart. So the fool says in his heart, there is no God, but in the heart of the one who is ascending or going to dwell forever with God and in glory.

Is a heart in which there are workings of righteousness that you first in all things deal with God, you act upon him love the Lord your God with all your heart soul mind and strength. And you speak the truth in your heart and that first truth is that God is God and that you are not and that he is glorious it's exactly the opposite of the Psalm 14 fool and the Psalm 53 fool.

So this. This verse verse 2 press is upon us to question and it's a question that we cannot really consider enough because we are so easily trapped into drawing into focusing on what others can see the question is who are you in the secret place of your heart? And if

you're answering it, honestly.

You're going to have end up flying to Christ. Even if you are converted, even if you are someone in whom this wonderful work of renovation has begun.

When we consider the holiness that is required, you know, the other Psalm says the man of clean hands and pure heart the question who am I and the secret place of my heart if I'm answering accurately will send me flying to Christ but holding on to him if he is mine and I am his then there will be a work of renovation that is ongoing.

Within us.

Was tempted to say something about the road construction project on seventh street downtown, but the Marquee sign outside the Baymont Inn on Highway 50 worded it a little bit better they have for months and months probably a couple years now had on their sign remodeling to serve you better there's a never-ending renovation project.

Well. That is if you'll allow the illustration perpetually placarded on the marquee sign of the Christian's heart. If your heart is not under the renovation described in this psalm. Then you have no reason to think that heaven will be your home. Yes Christ is our only worthiness. To be to dwell in God's holy hill.

And you always holy hill but in those whom he is there worthiness he is doing this work of fitting us for that glory of which he is worthy. So the heart that is described of this blameless one and that's really a better translation than uprightly the one who walks blamelessly who works righteousness in the heart and speaks truth in the heart such a heart is expressed or can be identified by a collection of many symptoms, but here's eight that the that David by the Holy Spirit gives us in this psalm.

Godly heart will produce. Godly behavior. And here are indicators first it's a heart that doesn't put it about with the tongue foot it says backbite in the English here and most English translations have something similar they are translating from especially other versions ancient Greek and Syriac and you know other other ancient language translations from the Hebrew and the reason is that the use of the word foot as a verb.

Doesn't really occur much in the Hebrew Bible there's one here and a couple other places where it's possibly being used as a verb but literally it says he doesn't foot with the tongue. It's an unusual phrase limit is 1916 says you shall not go up and down as a tail bearer among your people and so maybe there's a connection there the idea seems to be in connection you had the heart at the end of verse 2 and immediately it starts talking about the foot and the tongue and he's using all of these body part words and the idea seems to be that the godly man is really worried about.

Primarily concerned with what God sees in the secret place of the heart but the unboundly man or the ungodly woman is very busy making their tongue serve their themselves and their own interests this gossiping or perhaps backbiting but I think trying to fairly translate the the verse we should be careful of how.

How we use our words if you find yourself obsessing over what to say and how to say it to gain, you know, the upper hand in competition with others. If you if you find yourself trying to figure out how to say things especially so that you will look better and especially when that comes by way of making someone else look worse.

I think that's a probably the the primary place where we put it about with the tongue. Or perhaps you try to think of. A believable version of a falsehood that can make you look better than the truth would have. So. The the the godly does not view his tongue as his own weapon or instrument for his own praise but as something to serve and honor his maker who doesn't do evil to his neighbor.

This word neighbor is a lot broader than the word friend at the at the end of verse three this just means somebody other than yourself. And so he doesn't do evil to his neighbor or unwilling to do evil to anyone that is and then verse three nor does he take up a reproach against and actually the word friend here is a preposition being used as a noun the one near to him it's a word for near and the idea being that God is the one who in his providence has put us in proximity to others.

You've been put in very close proximity to those in your own family and and so we should obey especially concerning them but there are others whom in God's providence have been put into the same congregation as we have for Corinthians 12 God deciding the arrangement of the body or those who in God's provenance end up in our neighborhood or our near physical neighbors and there's a recognition that it is God who as the apostle tells the Athenians.

Enact 17, he assigns to us the times and boundaries of our dwelling and he is assigned other us to be near other people for their good and the nearer he puts someone to you the greater your obligation or the intensity of your obligation to be doing them good and so as verse 3, you know starts out with it anybody other than yourself and then comes to the one who is near you says you're unwilling even to and the word is is carry a, Proach or any negative word about someone and actually like the providence of the word being carry because we live in an age of the study of viruses and that has especially been.

Way of emphasized and the last year or so of our national consciousness. But you do not even want to be a carrier of gossip. You don't want to be near enough to get infected. You want to socially distance yourself from negative words about those who are near to you as much as possible.

You want to sanitize yourself from it and kill it. As soon as you as you hear it not let it enter your mind or your heart, you work hard to work hard. To believe the best and give the benefit of the doubt love believes all things hopes all things endures all things.

You remind yourself when someone tells you something about someone else that proverbs 18:17 says the first one to say something sounds right until the other one gets to come and asks some questions and that if you had heard both sides you would you would have a fuller and different picture of it.

This is why. For the counseling situation if I get one person and they come in and they're talking about some of the only person we work on is the person in front of me. Well work on the other person will work on the other other person together because we all can only see just just the one side.

You don't even want to be a carrier of gossip and one of the sad corollaries of this is that if you find that someone is in the habit of speaking ill of others around you then you. Maybe need to be less than the habit of being around them. So not even willing to carry receive or take up perhaps a reproach against his friend.

The godly heart will be reflected in the symptom of. Making little of appearances the the world may admire those who are wealthy or those who are fit or those who are attractive. Maybe those who are successful powerful influential whatever it is. But if someone is and you know, it says the vile person here the the root of that word means rejected or reprobate.

That we will greatly pity someone who is reprobate rather than admire him regardless of his worldly or earthly attainments will be very little moved by what the world admires and very much moved by whether or not someone is right with God and that's you see that in the next phrase the flip side of that is the one fearing Yahweh the godly one honors to a believer there is no one so honorable.

Is another believer no matter how lowly that person is and that believer is and the eyes of the world another believer ought to esteem them greatly. Probably some of the most esteemed human beings I've ever met were some of the least educated least powerful certainly porous. You know, South Sudanese newar Presbyterian pastors who had never really had a home and who might spend a month and the only thing they eat in that month is grass that they're able to forage but they have Christ and they are great in the eyes of heaven and those whose hearts are being pressed into the shape of their redeemer.

This also goes with how we are willing to think of or speak of or feel toward or act toward those who have a credible profession of faith and especially in your own congregation. A few years ago at Twin Lakes the pastor's fellowship that attend in the April Ian Hamilton was preaching and he said I have a palpable fear of speaking ill.

Of one who has been elected by the father redeemed by the sun and in dwelt by the spirit. There is nothing. More to be pitted by a man than his being his not being right with God and there is nothing to be more esteemed in a man than his being right with God and the Trinitarian conspiracy and collaboration that has gone into saving that individual.

And the respect that that demands from how we think of them and feel about them and speak of them.

He swears to his own hurt and doesn't change that one's not difficult to figure out it's just difficult to do. Obviously if you make an unlawful promise then you need to repent of having made the promise not keep it and sin again. It was making it that was a sin to begin with but how easy it is for us to decide that a promise was unlawful when it becomes inconvenient or costly to us.

We are tempted at that point to determine the rightness or wrongness something with whether it is pleasant or comfortable or convenient to us. Rather than determining rightness and wrongness by whether it pleases God. So there's actually something very big at stake when you're tempted not to keep your promise anymore because it's become inconvenient to you.

And the place, you know, the places that I have seen this the most in pastoral ministry sadly are in marriage vows and membership vows. Wives are husbands that convince themselves that whatever it was that their spouses done would make it wrong to stay with them and they indulged themselves and run off with whomever they prefer to the one to whom they've committed themselves or church members that because of a little discomfort or going through some spiritual difficulty or even not caring about spiritual health getting tired of caring too much about godliness will convince themselves.

That it would you know, I'm not doing well here spiritually what God really wants me to do is to do well and so what pleases me and will make me more comfortable is if I break my promises here. Now that is not the same as someone who says I'm not doing well spiritually in God has given me these shepherds to help me and you know that kind of church member who comes and says, please help me let's and you know that process could end up with yeah, there's a matter of conscious.

Ness here or there's a place you might be able to serve better or. But the one who decides for themselves that it's a matter of righteousness to leave we swear to our hurt and we do not change. His silver he does not give in usury.

This is no I know this is going to be controversial because free market especially if you're an Australian economist is you know, next to the Gospel or maybe a little bit above it. But while free market principles can reinforce diligence by appealing to our self-interest. Free market principles can also expose who are true master is when we have the opportunity to profit from someone else's pain.

The Bible is very serious about not taking advantage of those who are in great need by profiting over from lending to them as much as you possibly can. And there is a principle here that applies not just to when someone is in great need of money, but perhaps there's a product that's in scarcity you take.

Yeah, you convince yourself that in God's providence you have and they don't and so you are going to squeeze the situation to gain as much of that advantage as possible. Scripture tells us that we cannot serve both the Lord and wealth. And seeing another person's neediness as an opportunity to grow our wealth is the opposite of seeing another's neediness as an opportunity to steward our wealth in the service of generosity.

In other words, the godly man isn't against wealth but he wants to grow his wealth by doing others good. Okay so this doesn't like don't invest you know, when you're investing you are doing someone good out of a desire to do them good and then they share with you the good that comes to them that's very different than lending to get interest or usury the way the the scripture talks about it, our hearts are often exposed more in seasons of plenty than they are in seasons of scarcity.

What we do and we are able to do whatever we want shows more of who we are. In our hearts and then finally the bribe against the innocent he will not take and. Don't know if I've mentioned to you before but there are actually not there is not a Hebrew word for bribe it's the same as the word for gift and context determines it what it is is when you are in a position of power or influence, especially where you are going to make a judgment call that concerns others that you would be unwilling to take gifts from any of the parties involved because you mistrust your own heart and you do not want.

To prejudice your authority or your decision-making your your judging, so there are all these situations that are good litmus tests as it were you stick this situation in and you pull it out and either turns red or blue and the Holy Spirit helps us because it's very easy to convince ourselves that our hearts are one way but the real test is you know, how am I using my words and am I seeking to do a special?

Good to those whom God has placed nearest me and my refusing even to be a carrier of gossip and what do I esteem and others do I admire the way the world admires or do I give the most weight to a person's connection to God and Christ do I keep my promises and not decide what's right and wrong based on what's pleasing to myself or comfortable to myself do I view.

God's giving me plenty as an opportunity for stewardship and generosity am I unwilling to tempt myself for allow myself to be tempted to prejudice so there's eight eight places where the godly heart expresses itself, finally. If we find that we are being conformed to Christ in these things not that we are.

Not that we are exactly like this you remember the Baymont Inn it's a perpetual as it were remodeling your renovation project, but if we are. Joined to Christ and being made like him then it's not just that we may dwell that we have access to his holy hill but we will be planted there we are so entrenched though the word when it says he who does these shall not be moved the word means to toddler or shake or shiver or maybe slide or slip even a little bit?

If you have a work that has been begun in you because you are joined to Jesus Christ. You are secured forever. You can never be shaken in the idea here isn't so much shaken on earth it has reference back to the holy the hill of God's holiness at the end of verse 1 you're standing with God can never shake even a little bit, you know this end of Psalm 4 Psalm 15 is you know, kind of an Old Testament equivalent of therefore there is now no condemnation for the one who is in Christ Jesus, not only not even a little bit.

You may have the experience of Romans 7, as you are still under renovation, but you have the fixed certainty of Romans 8 because after all the way this renovation project in your heart got underway is because the father is seeking worshipers and it's his work that has been begun in you and it will certainly be completed so as you think about these things and some of these are really hard right?

The use of the tongue and not even being willing to hear gossip and. When having the opposite view of admiration then the world and you know, it can be very convicting to really take those parts of this Psalm to heart and so it's wonderful to get to the end and to see that the God who has started in this work in you will complete it and that your status with him does not move back and forth with how well you are doing in these eight areas that are in the middle of the psalm, it's a great encouragement to us as.

Believe.