

## **The Godly Person**

### **Psalm 15**

#### **Pray**

#### **Three Things...**

Good morning! If you are new here, my name is Dan Burleson. I am one of the Associate Pastors here at Cornerstone. And we always tell our guests three things. First, we are really grateful that you are with us. You are God's gift to us in this time we that we have together. So thank you again for worshipping with us. Second, you are in a place where the ground is level. Which means no one is any higher, better or more significant than anyone else. The ground at the foot of the cross is level ground and we are sinners who need a Savior and Jesus is that Savior. And while your salvation is a personal matter, God never designed for it to be a private matter. He wants us to live as brothers and sisters in the family of God. Which leads to the Third, thing we need to tell you... we love you enough to speak the truth to you. That's truth with a capital "T". The truth from God's Word. The truth about Jesus. His Person. His Works. And His Words. How He can transform your life from the inside out. He is the Cornerstone of our faith.

We are taking a break from our study in Revelation this morning to look at Psalm 15. The thing that intrigued me the most about this Psalm was the two-fold question at the beginning. The more I read the question, the more I was drawn into the Psalm. It's not a long Psalm. It's just five short verses. It begins with the question, gives the answer, and ends with a promise. But the question is an important question. Some have described Psalm 15 as the "Ultimate Q&A."

There are many great Q&A verses or passages in God's Word. On purity, I love Psalm 119:9—"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word." On forgiveness, there is Matthew 18:21-22 – "21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." On salvation there is Luke 18:18 – "18 A ruler questioned Him [Jesus], saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the verses that follow give the answer. And in Acts 16:30-31, we see the Philippian jailer ask Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved...". Such great passages with important questions and answers.

But our question this morning that is one that must be understood correctly in order to understand the answer and the promise. Psalm 15 is a wisdom Psalm written by David. We need to understand the question that David was asking. If we get that wrong, we could end up thinking that one could get to heaven by doing good works. But this passage is not about salvation. In order to understand this passage, we must first recognize that the two-fold question is a rhetorical one. That is, the question is given for dramatic effect, to create interest, and to grab the readers attention. The question sure did grab my attention. The question got me excited to preach this passage this morning.

Again, Psalm 15 is not a passage about salvation. It is not asking, “God, who can go to heaven?” It is about sanctification. It is about being the godly person that God wants you to be. This passage will not tell us everything that God wants to see in the life of the godly person. But it shares enough for us to be able examine ourselves today to see if we are living as God wants us to live.

As we read this passage this morning, we will see David describe the moral integrity and personal holiness of the person who worships God. That is living a life of worship that is pleasing to God. My prayer as we look at this Psalm this morning is that we would search our heart to see if the answer God gives to this question is true in our lives.

### **Let’s read Psalm 15...**

*Psalm 15 (NASB95) — A Psalm of David. 1 O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. 3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.*

### **Let’s look at verse 1...**

#### **I. The Question**

*O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?*

These two questions are similar, but not identical. The first question, “who may abide in Your tent?,” is talking about a temporary condition. The word “abide” is a Hebrew word referring to sojourning or spending the night someplace. It is a temporary residence. “Tent” like “abide” refers to a temporary dwelling. Do you remember the tabernacle in the Old Testament? The Jews would transport it with them as they traveled. The tabernacle was the place where God dwelt among His people. Exodus 25:8–9 says, “Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9 “According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.” So, the first question is dealing with something temporary.

The second question in verse 1, “Who may dwell on Your holy hill?,” is talking about a permanent condition. The word “dwell” is a Hebrew word referring to settling down. It is a permanent residence. The word, “hill,” like “dwell,” refers to a permanent dwelling place.

Many other verses in the Psalms talk about this dwelling...

*Psalm 27:4 (NASB95) — 4 One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.*

*Psalm 61:4 (NASB95) — 4 Let me dwell in Your tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Your wings. Selah.*

*Psalm 23:6 (NASB95) — 6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

*Psalm 84:4 (NASB95) — 4 How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You. Selah.*

To abide or to dwell in a tent, the house of the Lord, or a holy hill is to have access to the presence of God.

Several verses talk about God’s Holy hill...

*Psalm 3:4 (NASB95) — 4 I was crying to the LORD with my voice, And He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.*

*Psalm 43:3–4 (NASB95) — 3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places. 4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.*

*Psalm 87:1–3 (NASB95) — 1 His foundation is in the holy mountains. 2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah.*

Pastor Steve Lawson writes, “The Lord’s holy hill refers to the place of the Lord’s sanctuary, Mount Zion, the temple mount in Jerusalem where David had brought the ark that represented the presence and power of God...the psalmist burst forth with praise for the divine dwelling place of the Lord Almighty...This place was special to Old Testament saints because it allowed them to come, uniquely, into the presence of God.” To be in God’s tent or on His holy hill is to be in His presence. It is to have fellowship and communion with God.

So back to Psalm 15:1...The question David is asking is, “Who may have fellowship and communion with God? The answer is going to give the characteristics of the godly person who lives a life of worship. The answer will also help us evaluate our own lives. One pastor writes, “Psalm 15 is not a roadmap for the sinner to find salvation, it is an explanation of how the one who already belongs to God is to live.” That being said, not every person is a believer. Not every person has placed their trust in Christ for salvation. Not every person is godly.

Let’s look at the answer to the question to see what a godly person looks like...

## **II. The Answer**

### **Look at Verse 2...**

*He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart.*

#### **A. His character: true**

We will first look at the character of the godly person. His character is true. Notice the words “walks,” “works,” and “speaks.” These words refer to characteristic or

habitual actions. That is, a godly person's character will consistently (but not perfectly) be true. His life has integrity all of the time, not sporadically. He does what is right regularly, not occasionally. He speaks truth daily, not once in a while. This is a habitual lifestyle of the one whose character is true. Notice three specific things about his character.

### 1. He is a man of integrity

His walk is blameless. The word "walk" again describes the daily pattern and direction of a person's lifestyle. A blameless person is one whose character is morally well-rounded. Every part of his life comes together to form a complete and balanced life of godly living.

### 2. He works righteousness

He does what is right. He pursues what is right in God's eyes. He is obedient to God. This righteous man leads a life marked by consistent conformity to God's Word.

### 3. He speaks truth in his heart

Truth means what is sure and trustworthy, not merely correct. He is not a hypocrite. Ephesians 4:25 says, "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another." And Colossians 3:9 says, "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,".

How are we doing in this area of character? Ask yourself, am I a person of integrity? Do I do what is right in God's eyes? Do I speak truth?

Notice three words at the end of verse 3..."in his heart". You see, character is not just about what is on the outside of a person. It is also what is on the inside. Your outward behavior may show one thing, but what is going on in your heart, your inner man, is quite different.

In our Level 1 counseling class on Monday nights, we have been looking at what the Bible says about the heart. There are over 1,000 references to the word "heart" in Scripture. The heart is man's control sinner—the inner man. It is the "why" of what we do. Mark 7:20–23 says, "*And He [Jesus] was saying, 'That which*

*proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. 21 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 “All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”* This is not an exhaustive list. But the godly man guards his heart.

Proverbs 4:23 says, “*Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.*” Regarding character, inside and out, the godly person’s character is true.

### **Look at Verse 3...**

*3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

#### **B. His words: restrained**

Now let’s look at the speech of the godly person. His words are restrained. That is, they are kept under control. Notice the words “not,” “nor,” and “nor” in verse 3. These words again refer to tried qualities and habitual actions. The godly man will aim at consistent rather than intermittent behavior. Notice three things about his words...

1. The godly person does not slander with his tongue.

This person does not attack others maliciously with his mouth. The Hebrew word for slander is related to the words for “leg” and “spy.” Slander refers to someone walking around seeking tidbits of gossip to pass on to someone else. Such people behave as spies or conspirators trafficking in information that tears someone else down. In Romans 8:30, slander is listed as one of many sins that people who turn against God commit.

2. The godly person does not do evil to his neighbor.

He maintains right relationships with his neighbors, not harming or hurting them. The word “neighbor” in this verse refers to one’s fellow human being or friend. It can also refer to one’s closest relationships and especially those of his own family. Even when a neighbor or friend does evil to the godly man, the godly man will show love to his neighbor.

3. The godly person does not take up a reproach against his friend.

He does not speak evil of his friends. He does not ridicule. He does not discredit his neighbor in the eyes of other. The godly person lifts up his neighbors, saying what is truthful and affirming.

So how are we doing in the area of our speech? Are your words restrained? Do you slander or gossip? Do you do or say evil things to your neighbor?

**Look at Verse 4...**

*In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD;  
He swears to his own hurt and does not change;*

### **C. His allegiance: clear-cut**

Third, the godly person's allegiance is clear-cut. In verse 4, David identifies the godly person in terms of the people whom he rejects or accepts. The godly person is one who says no to the wicked and yes to the godly, rejecting those whom God rejects and accepts those whom God accepts. Let's look at three things that describe the godly man's allegiance...

1) A godly man despises a reprobate.

A reprobate refers to a person who has been rejected by God. A reprobate is a particularly vile person. A vile man is one who is worthless, polluted, dirty, or morally depraved. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, "Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." A godly man is not attracted to the company of the ungodly. This is not a cruel rejection, but a righteous response to unrepentant wickedness. Second...

2) A godly man honors those who fear the Lord.

He affirms and associates with those who reverence God with a life of faith and obedience. How can you or I honor godly people? Third...

3) A godly man swears to his own hurt and does not change.

In other words, he keeps his commitments. He has a deep sense of integrity and must often make material sacrifices to be honest. The godly person does what he says even when it hurts him to do so. He keeps his word.

How are we doing in the area of allegiance? Do we spend time with bad company? Do we honor godly people? Do we keep our commitments?

### **Look at the first part of Verse 5...**

*He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.*

#### **D. His dealings: honorable**

Fourth, the godly persons dealings are honorable. In verse 5, David focuses on how the godly person uses his money. According to God's Word, God's people are to put people and God before money. **1 Timothy 6:10** says, "*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*" Verse five lists two ways the godly man is honorable in his dealings...

1) A godly man does not put out his money at interest.

He considers his neighbor in the way he handles his money. He does not take advantage of the person who must borrow. He uses his money to help others in need.

2) A godly person does not take a bribe against the innocent.

A godly person cannot be bought. He does not let the potential for personal gain influence matters of principle. He doesn't use money to sway things against innocent people or the unfortunate.

How are we doing in our dealings? Do we use what God has given us to help others in need? Do we honor God with our finances?

So, this morning as we have evaluated our lives, how are we doing overall? Our approach to God should not be overly casual. Do you want to abide in His tent? Do you want to dwell on His holy hill? Do you want to daily have fellowship and



communion with God? Is moral integrity and personal holiness important to us all the time?

If we are totally honest, we would say that we have fallen short in all of the areas the godly man's life that we have looked at this morning. In our character, we have fallen short. In our speech, we have fallen short. In our allegiance, we have fallen short. And in our dealings, we have fallen short. There is only one person who has been perfect in each of the areas that we have looked at today. That person is Jesus Christ.

It is only possible to be the godly person because there has been a change, a transformation that takes place in the soul of a man that produces righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

My question for you this morning is, "Are you in Christ?" Have you put your trust in Christ alone for salvation? When one does, there is a change in his life that has been worked by God. God makes you into the godly person. Will you put your trust in Christ this morning?

**Finally, look at the last part of Verse 5...**

*He who does these things will never be shaken.*

### **III. The Promise**

We have looked at the questions and answers. If we live the godly life, then there is a promise. He who does these things will never be shaken.

*Psalm 16:8 (NASB95) — 8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

*Psalm 112:6–7 (NASB95) — 6 For he will never be shaken; The righteous will be remembered forever. 7 He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

*Proverbs 12:3 (NASB95) — 3 A man will not be established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be moved.*

What a promise!! The godly person will never be shaken. There might be difficulties and challenges in life. But the godly person will trust God in the areas he cannot control and obey God in the areas that he can control. When you trust and obey God, you can have a peace that surpasses all understanding. And the godly person will never be shaken.

**Let's pray**

**Benediction:**

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NASB95) — 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.